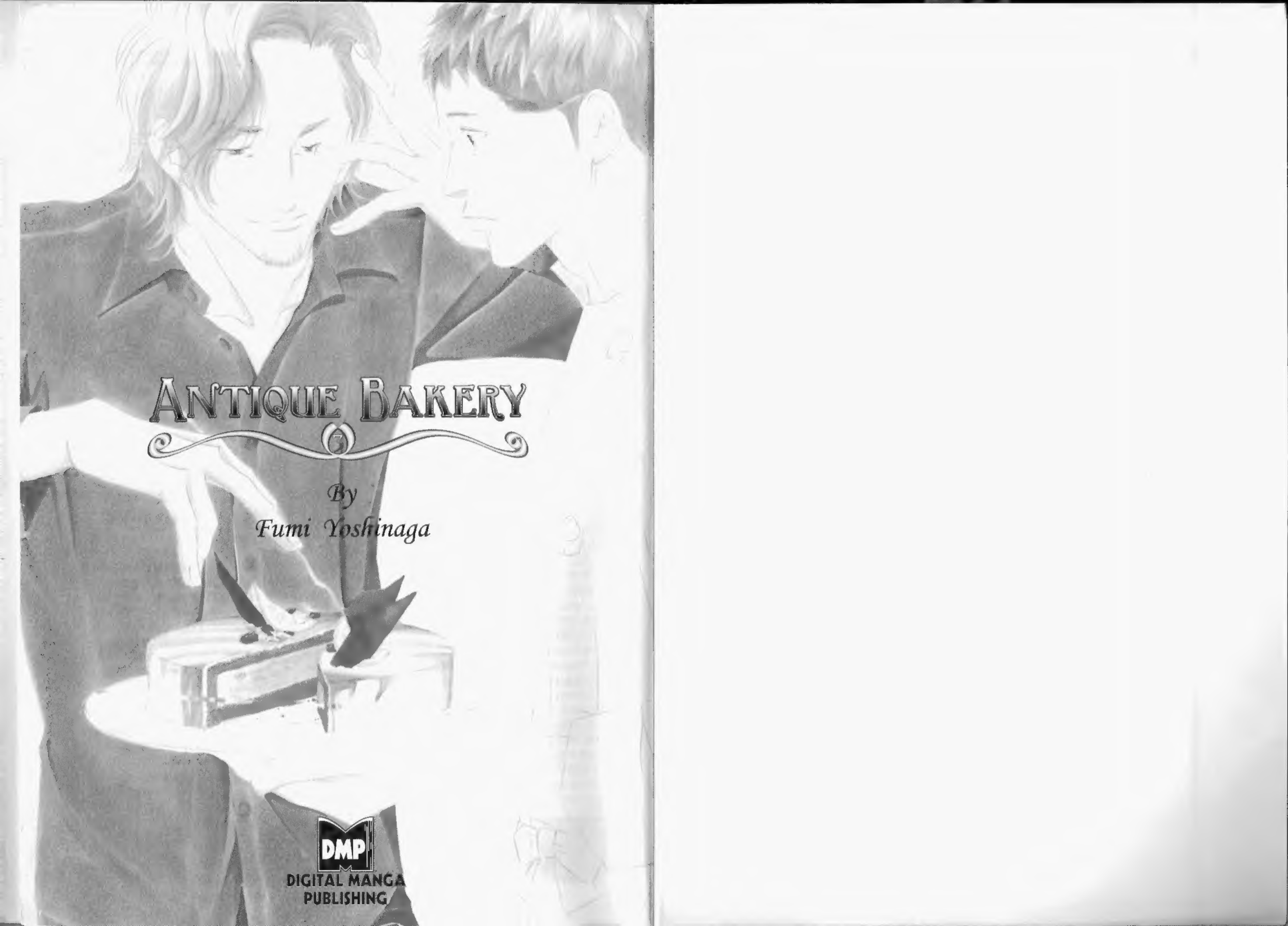


A black and white manga-style illustration. On the left, a man with long, wavy hair and a slight beard is shown from the chest up, wearing a dark jacket over a light shirt. He is looking down at a small, round cake on a white plate. On the right, another man with short, dark hair is shown in profile, looking towards the first man. He is wearing a light-colored shirt. The background is a simple, light-colored wall.

# ANTIQUE BAKERY

By  
*Fumi Yoshinaga*

# *character*



## **CHIKAGE KOBAYAKAWA**

34 YEARS OLD. BECAUSE HIS MOTHER WAS A LIVE-IN HOUSEKEEPER AT THE TACHIBANA RESIDENCE, CHIKAGE HAS KNOWN TACHIBANA SINCE CHILDHOOD. CLUMSY AND A LITTLE SLOW ON THE UPTAKE, HE IS SOMETHING OF A BURDEN. AT THE REQUEST OF TACHIBANA'S CONCERNED PARENTS, HE ARRIVES AT THE BAKERY "ANTIQUE" TO LOOK AFTER TACHIBANA. BECAUSE OF HIS WEAK EYESIGHT AND NERVOUSNESS, HE IS NEVER WITHOUT HIS SUNGLASSES. ONCE HIS GLASSES ARE REMOVED, HIS HANDSOME LOOKS CAPTIVATE ONO, AND ALTHOUGH NEARLY OVERPOWERED BY THE NOTORIOUS "DEMONIC CHARM," CHIKAGE MANAGES TO REMAIN INNOCENT AND OBLIVIOUS - FOR THE TIME BEING!

## **YUSUKE ONO**

32 YEARS OLD. PASTRY CHEF AT THE BAKERY "ANTIQUE." FORMER HIGH SCHOOL CLASSMATES WITH TACHIBANA. TACHIBANA WAS THE OBJECT OF ONO'S FIRST CONFESSION OF LOVE, AS WELL AS HIS FIRST REJECTION. WHEN THE TWO NEXT MEET AGAIN, ONO HAS OVERCOME THIS PAINFUL PAST AND BLOSSOMED INTO A "GAY OF DEMONIC CHARM" WHO IS ABLE TO SEDUCE ANY MAN HE WANTS. ALTHOUGH HE POSSESSES IMPECCABLE TASTE AND TECHNIQUE AS A PASTRY CHEF OF GENIUS, HIS PERSONAL ALLURE IS ALWAYS THE CAUSE OF ROMANTIC TROUBLE IN THE WORKPLACE, AND HE IS FIRED FROM STORE AFTER STORE UNTIL HE FINALLY SETTLES IN AT THE BAKERY "ANTIQUE."



## **KEIICHIRO TACHIBANA**

32 YEARS OLD. OWNER OF THE BAKERY "ANTIQUE." GRANDSON OF THE WEALTHY DIRECTOR OF A MAJOR FINANCIAL GROUP. FORMERLY A TOP-CLASS BUSINESSMAN AT A TRADING COMPANY, HE SUDDENLY QUILTS HIS JOB TO START UP THE BAKERY "ANTIQUE." CRYPTICALLY, HE CARES NOT ONE OUNCE FOR ANY SORT OF PASTRY, AND HIS ONLY OPINION OF SWEETS IS, "TASTES LIKE SUGAR." ALTHOUGH HE WAS THE VICTIM OF A KIDNAPPING AT THE AGE OF NINE, HE RETAINS NO MEMORY OF THE EXACT EVENTS OF THE ORDEAL. THE PERPETUAL STUBBLE ON HIS FACE IS SOMETHING HE WAS NOT ALLOWED IN HIS DAYS AS A CORPORATE BUSINESSMAN, AND HE TREASURES ITS PRESENCE AS A SYMBOL OF "A MAN'S AESTHETIC."

## **EIJI KANDA**

21 YEARS OLD. ASSISTANT PASTRY CHEF AT THE BAKERY "ANTIQUE." FORMERLY A MIDDLE STRAW-WEIGHT WORLD CHAMPION BOXER OF GENIUS, HE IS FORCED TO GIVE UP THE RING WHEN HE IS DIAGNOSED AS HAVING DETACHED RETINAS. SHORTLY THEREAFTER, HE ENCOUNTERS ONO'S DEVILISHLY DELICIOUS "CAKE OF ALL CAKES" AND BECOMES AN APPRENTICE PÂTISSIER. DATING BACK TO HIS DAYS AS A BOXER, HE POSSESSES AN INSATIABLE LOVE OF PASTRIES. AN ABANDONED CHILD AS WELL AS A FORMER MEMBER OF A BIKER GANG, HE HAS THE MOST COLORFUL PAST OUT OF THE FOUR MEN, DESPITE HIS YOUNG AGE OF 21.



THIS IS NOT THE LIFE I WAS AIMING FOR.

# ANTIQUE BAKERY

RECIPE 11 pt.1- 005

RECIPE 11 pt.2- 029

RECIPE 12 pt.1- 055

RECIPE 12 pt.2- 091

RECIPE 13- 125

RECIPE 14- 163

## The Story so far...

In the middle of a residential district sits the antique bakery. Tachibana, the owner with the perpetual stubble on his face, and Ono, the genius pastry chef of "Gay Demonic Charm," are former classmates from high school, where Tachibana once brutally rejected Ono's confession of love for him. Kanda, the apprentice pastry chef, is a retired former boxer who possesses a fanatical sweet tooth. Now, a fourth man has arrived on the scene: extremely klutzy and addressing Tachibana as, "My Lord," his name is Chikage Kobayakawa... to these four men at the bakery "antique," customers come to buy their cakes, each with their own story...

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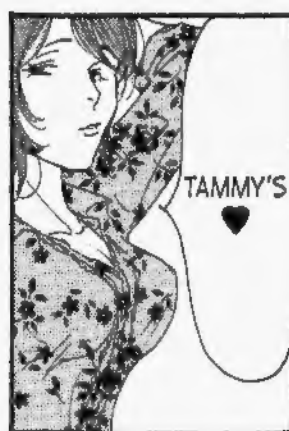
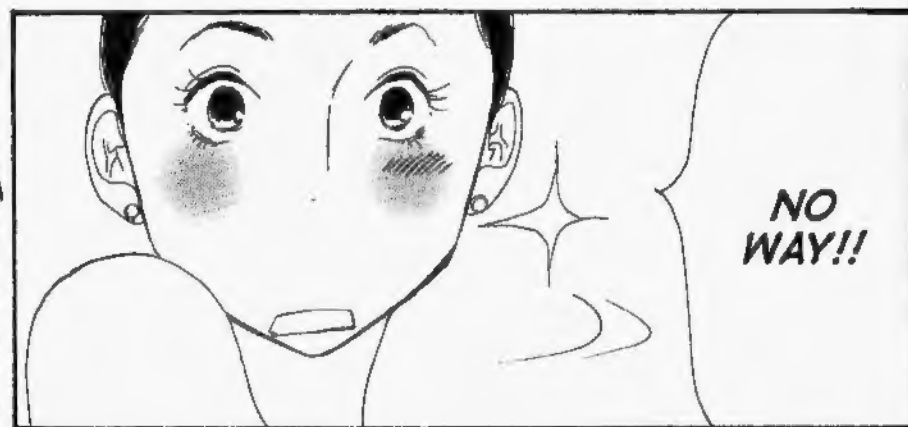
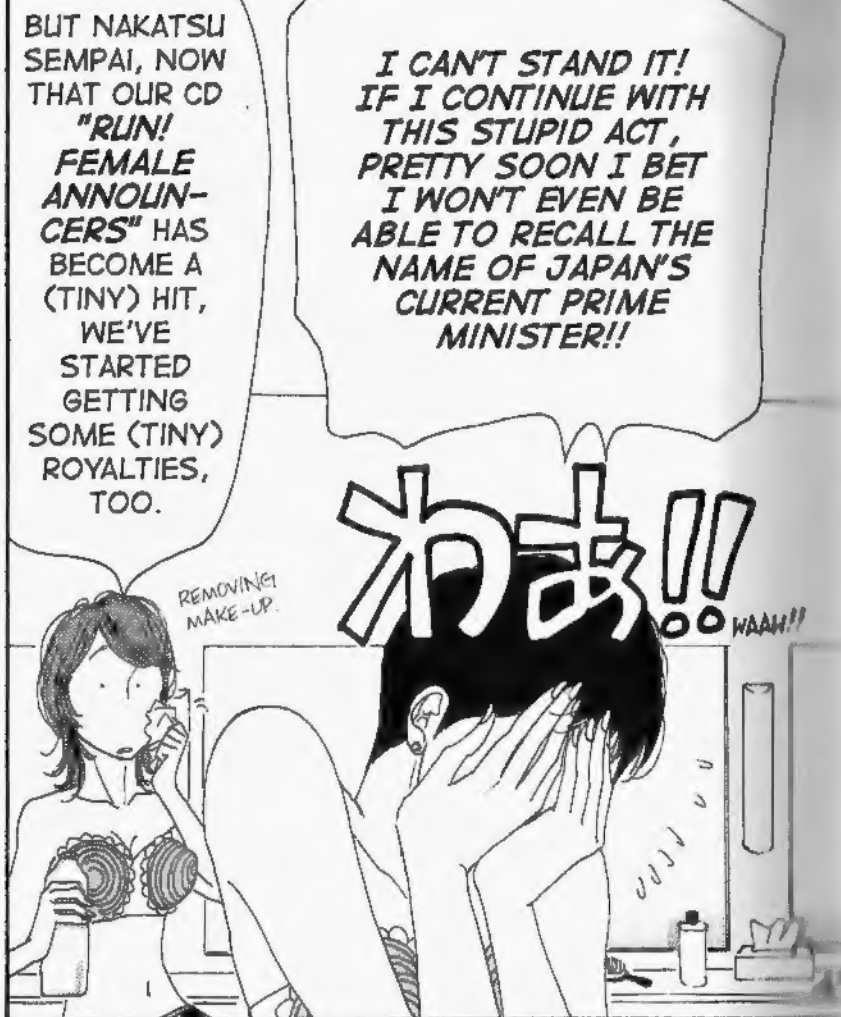
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# ANTIQUE BAKERY



...TO BE PART OF SOME  
FARCICAL REPORTER  
DUO ASSIGNED ONLY  
BORDERLINE-COMEDY  
NEWS, SINGING  
STUPID SONGS LIKE  
"BIG-BUSTED FEMALE  
ANNOUNCER UNIT  
HARUKA & TAMMY"!!

Recipe 11 (part 1)



**THERE HE IS!!**



I-I'M ONO, THE PÂTISSIER...



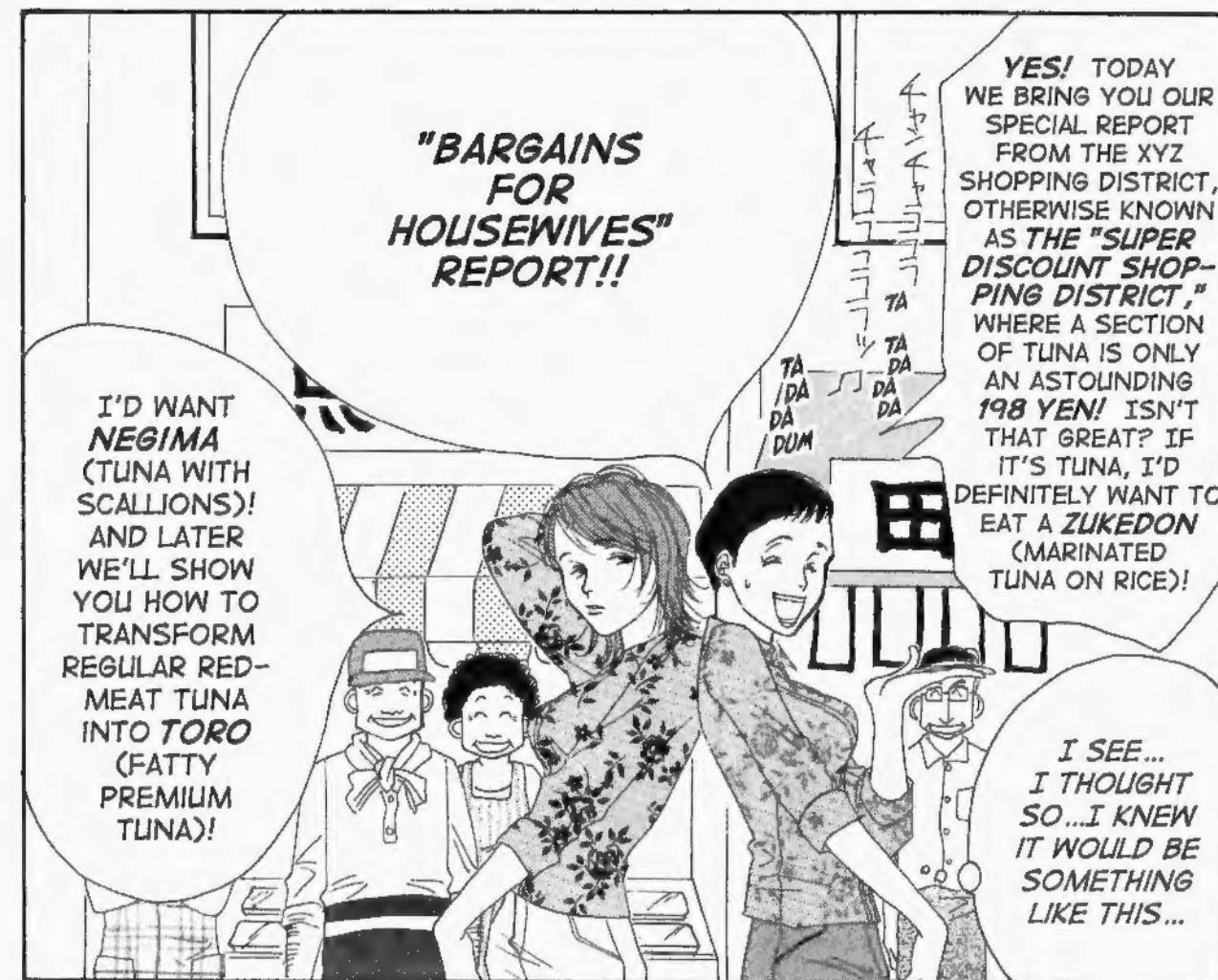
NOT YOU! I'M TALKING ABOUT THE SHY-LOOKING ONE WITH THE GLASSES! HE'S JUST MY TYPE!!

OH, WOW - HE'S GORGEOUS! HE'S REALLY, REALLY GORGEOUS!!

YOUR SHOP IS TO BE THE ONLY ONE IN THIS "NISETAN DEPARTMENT STORE SUB-LEVEL'S DREAMY DEBUT OF FAMOUS BAKERIES FAIR" WHICH STARTS THIS APRIL 26TH, WHERE CUSTOMERS WILL BE ABLE TO DINE IN, IS THAT CORRECT?

YES. OUR AIM IS TO PRESENT THE CUSTOMERS WITH THE MOST ELEGANT DESSERTS SUCH AS WOULD BE FITTING FOR THE FINALE OF ANY FINE FULL-COURSE FRENCH MEAL.

HE LOOKS SO TIMID, I BET HE WOULD WALK THREE STEPS BEHIND HIS GIRLFRIEND RATHER THAN RISK EVEN STEPPING ON HER SHADOW - HE'S LOVELY!



**"BARGAINS FOR HOUSEWIVES" REPORT!!**

I'D WANT **NEGIMA** (TUNA WITH SCALLIONS)! AND LATER WE'LL SHOW YOU HOW TO TRANSFORM REGULAR RED-MEAT TUNA INTO **TORO** (FATTY PREMIUM TUNA)!

YES! TODAY WE BRING YOU OUR SPECIAL REPORT FROM THE XYZ SHOPPING DISTRICT, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE **"SUPER DISCOUNT SHOPPING DISTRICT,"** WHERE A SECTION OF TUNA IS ONLY AN ASTOUNDING **198 YEN!** ISN'T THAT GREAT? IF IT'S TUNA, I'D DEFINITELY WANT TO EAT A **ZUKEDON** (MARINATED TUNA ON RICE)!

I SEE... I THOUGHT SO... I KNEW IT WOULD BE SOMETHING LIKE THIS...



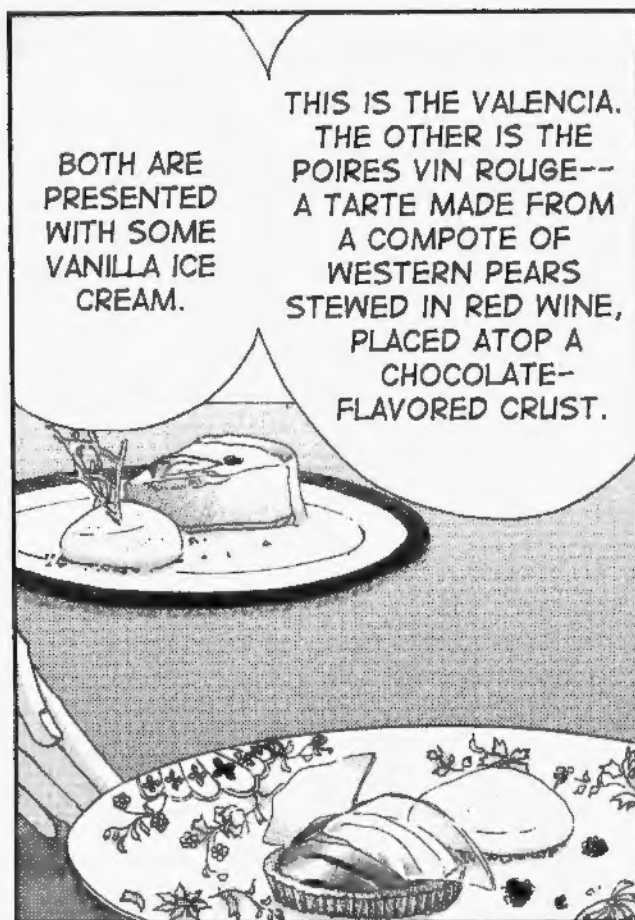
A PLEASURE TO MEET YOU. MY NAME IS TACHIBANA - I'M THE OWNER.



IT SEEMS THE HOUSEWIVES LIKE US BECAUSE, DESPITE OUR SEXY IMAGE, WE TALK ABOUT REALLY ORDINARY, DOMESTIC THINGS. STARTING TODAY, WE'RE PROVIDING FULL COVERAGE ON THE SPECIAL LIMITED OPENING OF FAMOUS CAKE SHOPS AT THE BAKERY FAIR IN THE DEPARTMENT STORE SUB-LEVEL FOOD COURT.

HAAAA... WHAT USE IS FLAUNTING OUR D-CLIPS TO A BUNCH OF HOUSEWIVES PREPARING DINNER? KAGAMI, WHAT WAS IT WE'RE SUPPOSED TO BE COVERING TODAY?

I SEE...WE'RE ALWAYS INTERVIEWING OLD MEN AND OLD LADIES WHEN WE COVER THE FISHMONGERS AND VEGETABLE VENDORS. I JUST HOPE THERE'LL BE SOME HANDSOME MEN AT THIS CAKE SHOP THING...



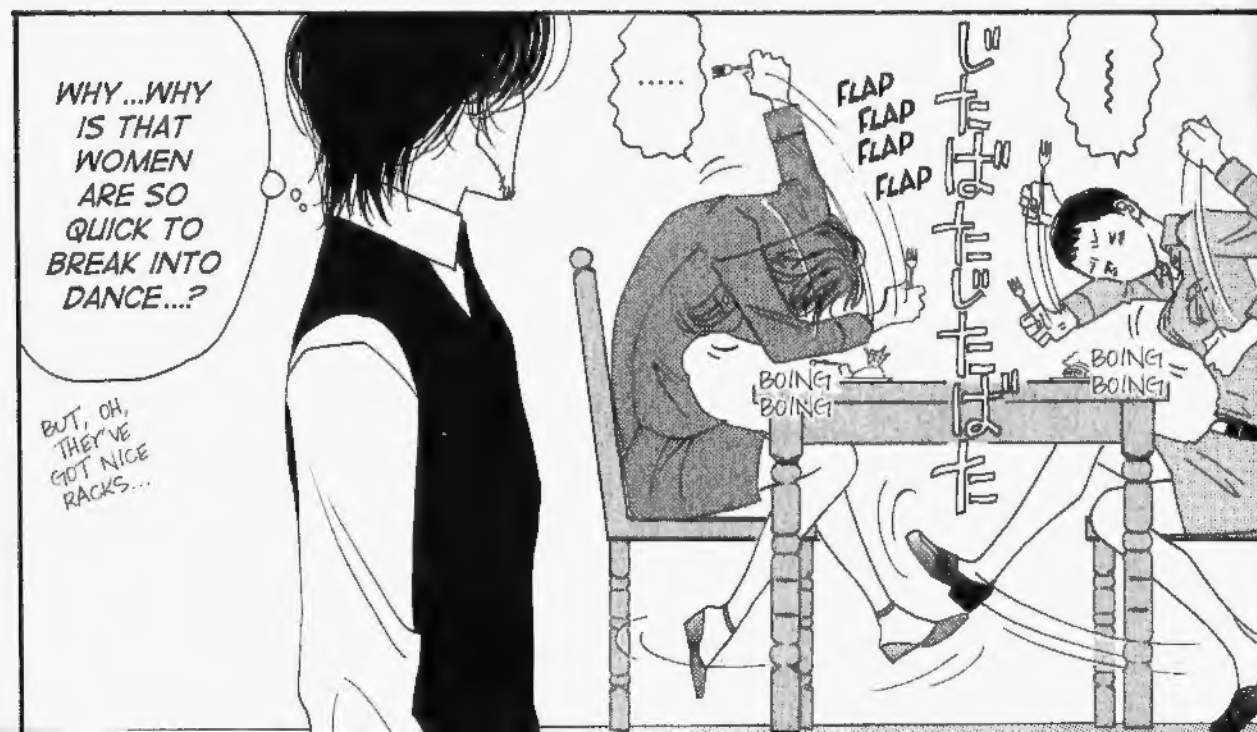
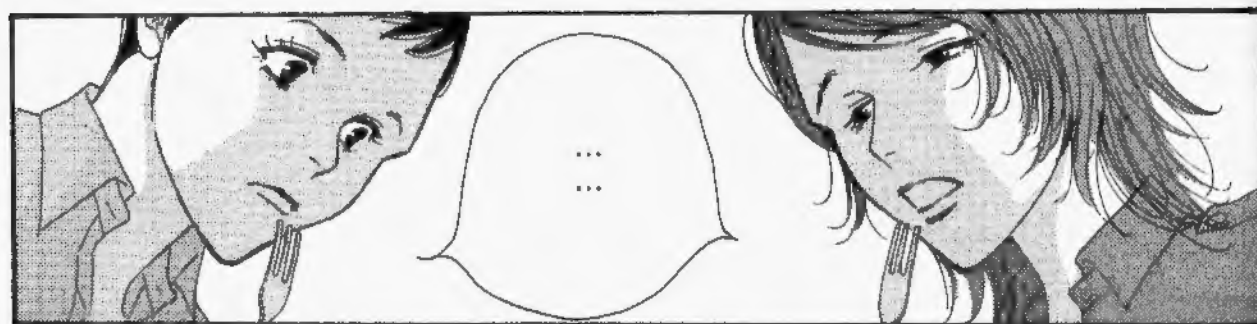
BOTH ARE PRESENTED WITH SOME VANILLA ICE CREAM.

THIS IS THE VALENCIA. THE OTHER IS THE POIRES VIN ROUGE-- A TARTE MADE FROM A COMPOTE OF WESTERN PEARS STEWED IN RED WINE, PLACED ATOP A CHOCOLATE-FLAVORED CRUST.

**SURRRE, BE MY GUEEST!**

**WHAAAT~?! MAY I REEAALL~YY?!**

**STYLIZED BEAUTY.**



WHY...WHY IS THAT WOMEN ARE SO QUICK TO BREAK INTO DANCE...?

BUT, OH, THEY'VE GOT NICE RACKS...

FLAP FLAP FLAP FLAP

BOING! BOING!

BOING! BOING!



A REFRESHING ORANGE MOUSSE, WRAPPED IN A BRIOCHE THOROUGHLY DOUSED WITH LIQUEUR AND ENCASED IN ORANGE GELATIN.

OHH, IT LOOKS SO TOTALLY DELICIOUS....

WOULD YOU CARE FOR A TASTE?



AND ON TOP OF THAT...



AH, YES. FOR THIS TIME OF YEAR, I RECOMMEND THIS "VALENCIA".

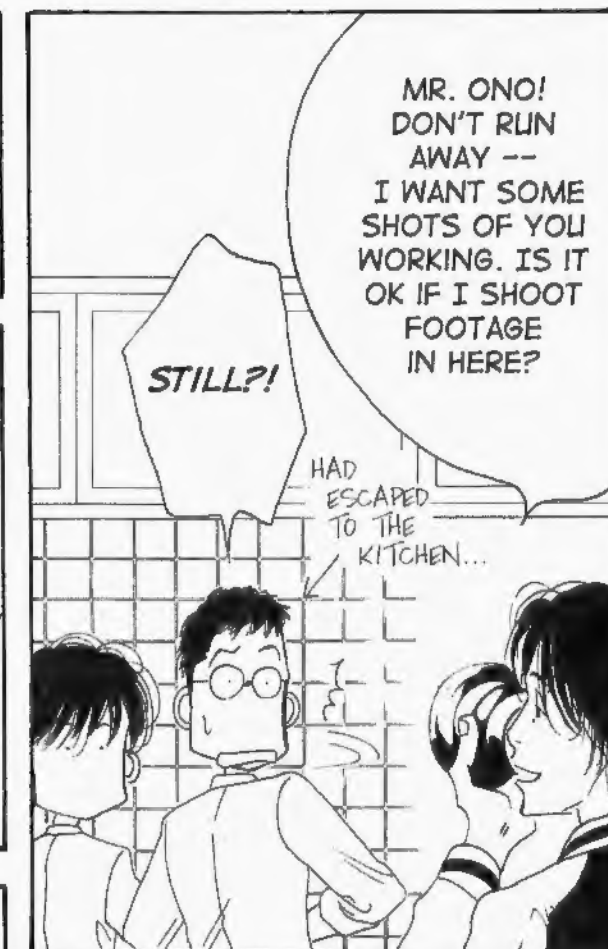
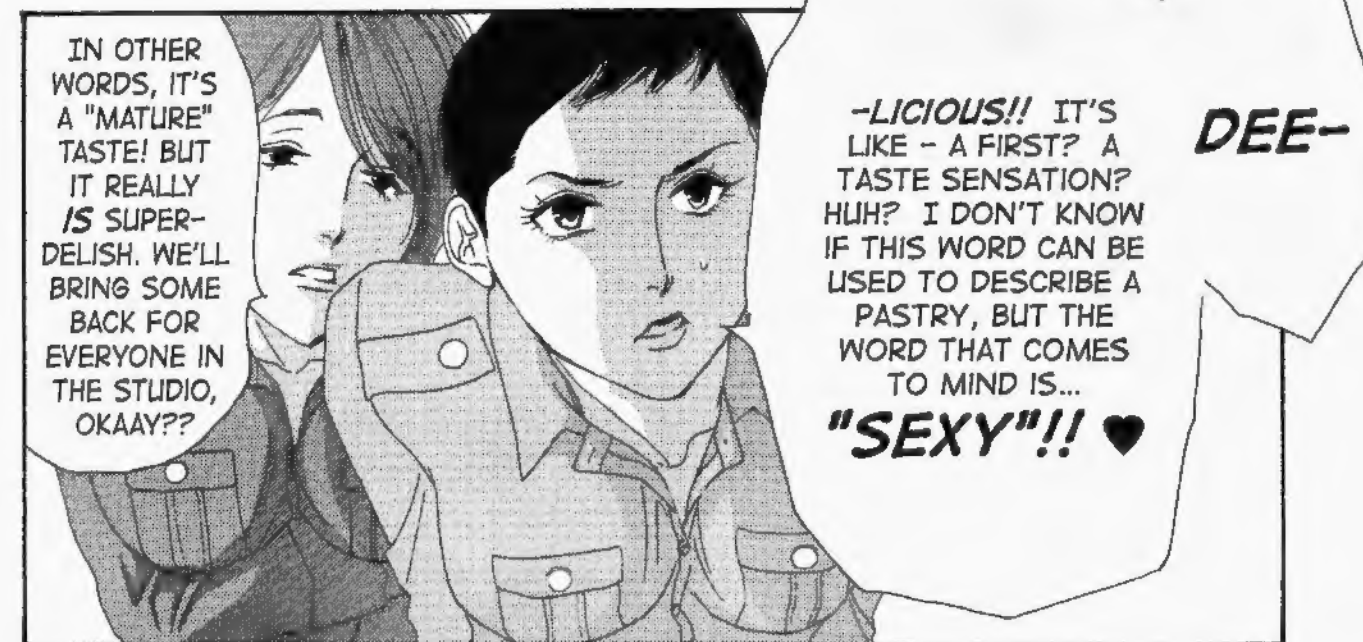
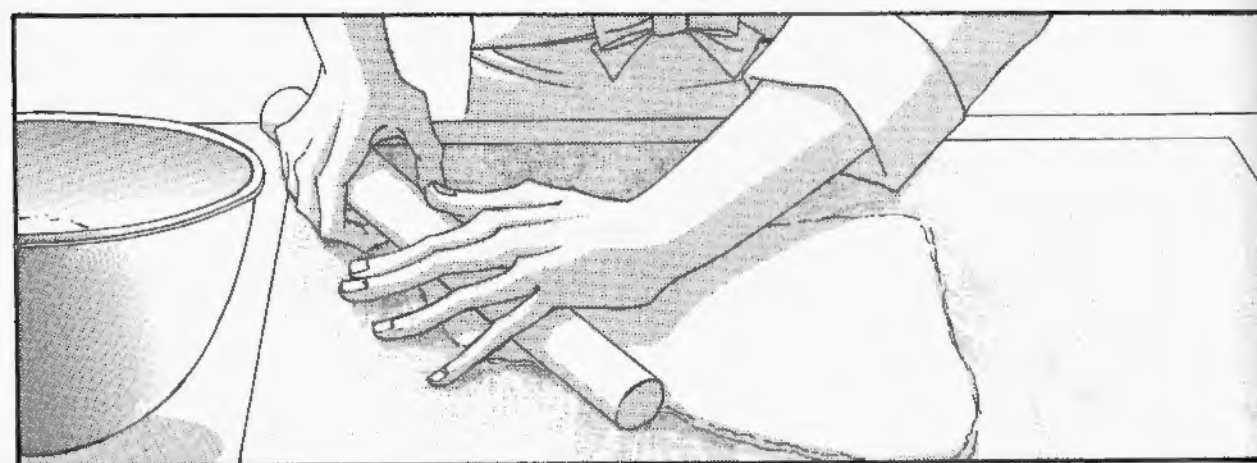
DAMN, SHE'S GOT A NICE RACK...

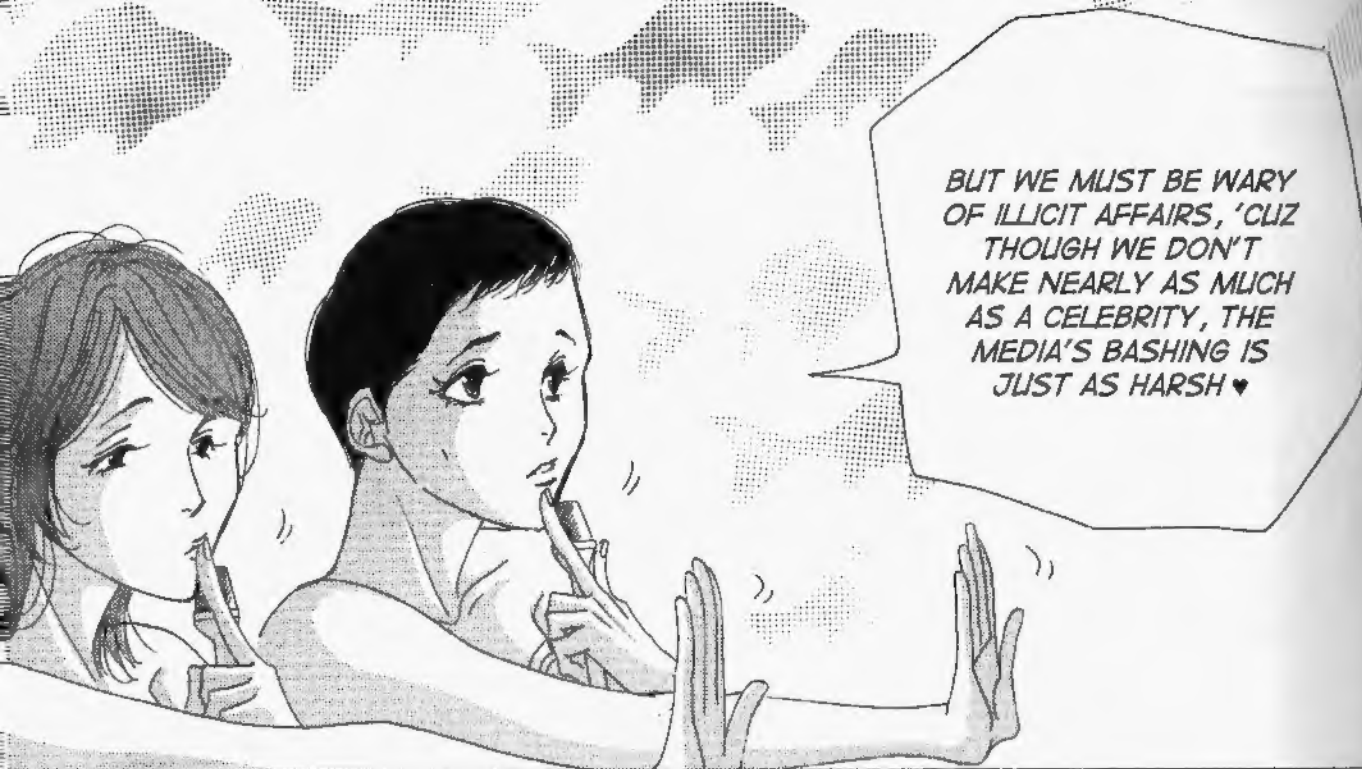
I'M SCARED... HER BREASTS ARE LIKE MELONS...

...HE'S SO INNOCENT THAT HE HAS TO TURN HIS EYES AWAY FROM MY CHEST! HOW SWEET! WHAT A DIFFERENCE FROM MOST JERKS WHOSE GAZE JUST SCREAMS, "I'M LOOKING, I'M LOOKING," STARING AT MY BOOBS WITHOUT ONCE BOTHERING TO LOOK ME IN THE FACE! I'M SO MOVED!

SOOO... CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT YOUR BEST, MOST DELICIOUS CAKE?

I'M LOOKING, I'M LOOKING...





BUT WE MUST BE WARY  
OF ILLICIT AFFAIRS, 'CUZ  
THOUGH WE DON'T  
MAKE NEARLY AS MUCH  
AS A CELEBRITY, THE  
MEDIA'S BASHING IS  
JUST AS HARSH ♡



♪ RUN RUN  
RUN, FEMALE  
ANNOUNCER!

GO GO,  
SEMPAI

IT DOESN'T  
MATTER! I'M  
GOING TO GIVE  
IT MY BEST  
FOR THE NEXT  
TWO DAYS -  
OH, MR.  
ONO ♡



GOTCHA!

HUH?!  
WHAT'S  
WITH THE  
GENEROUS  
ATTITUDE?

KAGAMI!! YOU CAN  
HAVE THE KID OR THE  
STUBBLY GUY, BUT  
GIVE ME THE ONE IN  
GLASSES!

RECORDING  
IN FIVE  
SECONDS...  
4, 3, 2 -

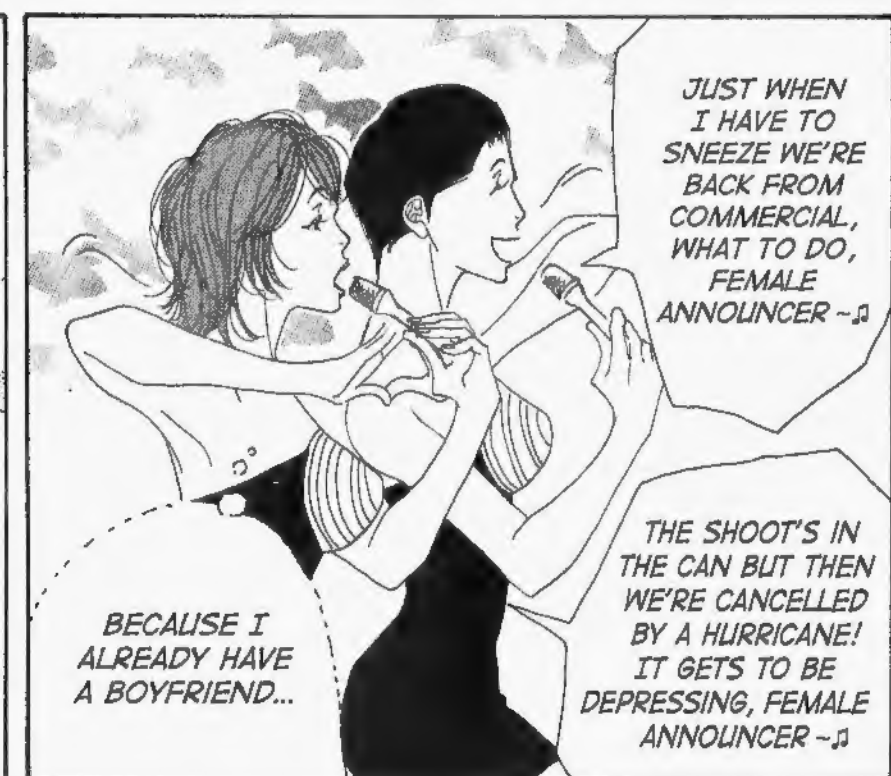
♪  
TADADADA  
TADADA  
ETC.  
♪

BORPA  
BATTA  
BATTA!



TCH!  
THAT'S  
RIGHT...  
YOU DO,  
DON'T  
YOU.

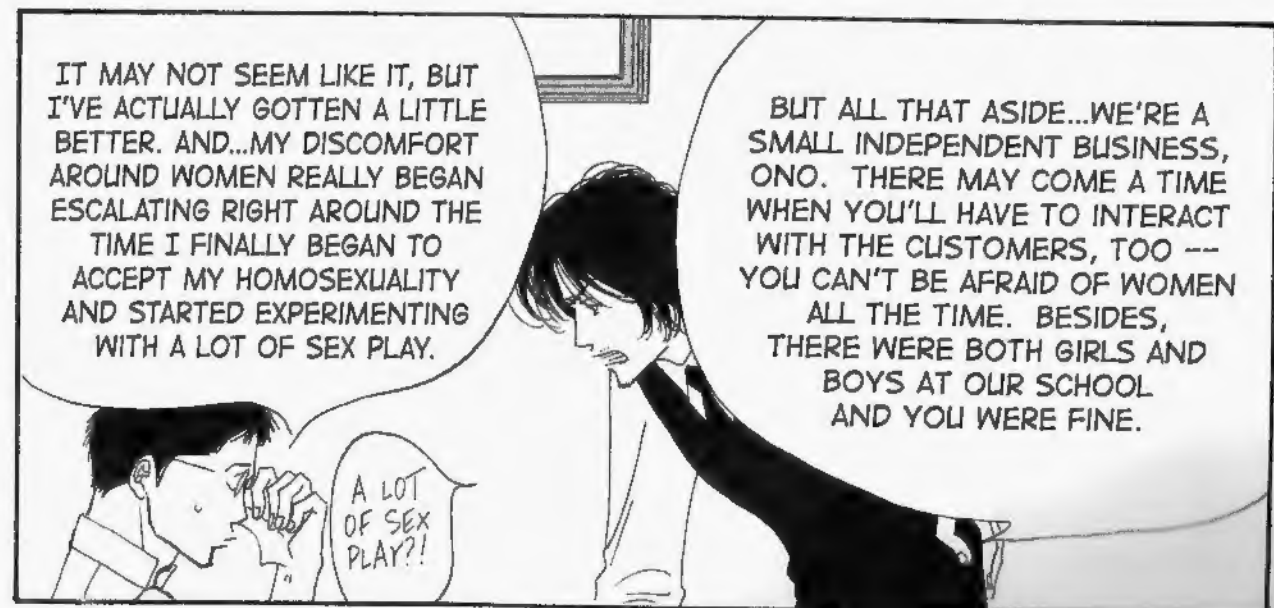
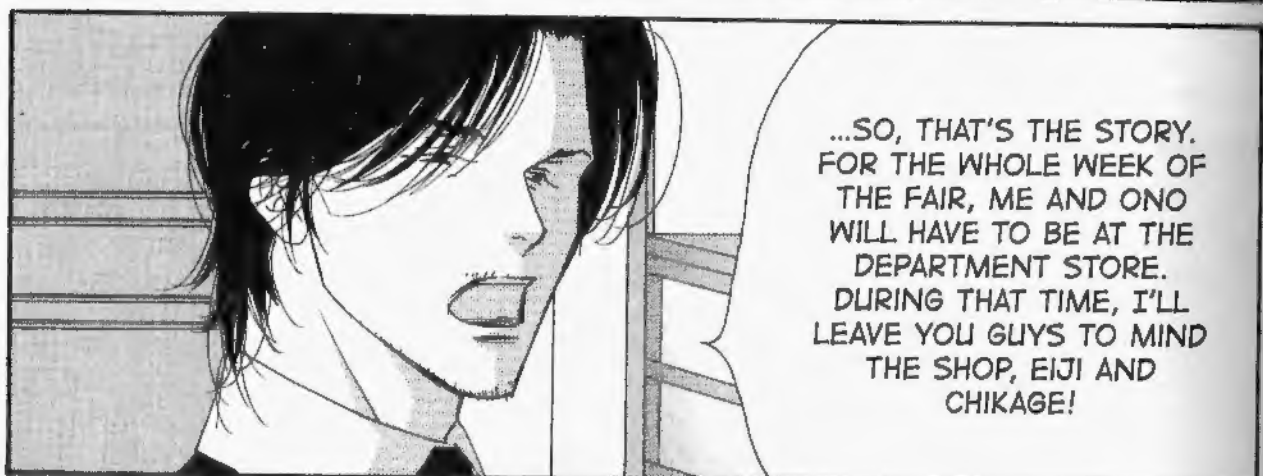
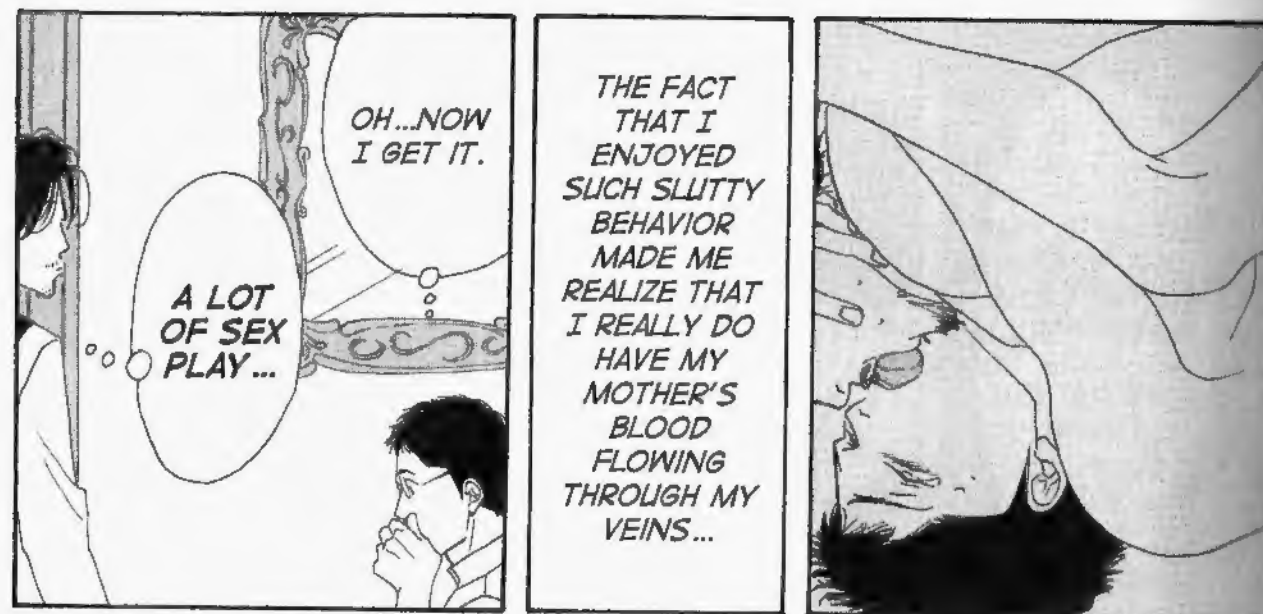
♪ BUT THE  
SPORTS  
SEGMENT IS  
PRETTY FUN -  
AND WITH A  
LITTLE LUCK,  
WE MIGHT BAG  
OURSELVES A  
RICH MAN ~ ♪



JUST WHEN  
I HAVE TO  
SNEEZE WE'RE  
BACK FROM  
COMMERCIAL,  
WHAT TO DO,  
FEMALE  
ANNOUNCER ~ ♪

BECAUSE I  
ALREADY HAVE  
A BOYFRIEND...

THE SHOOT'S IN  
THE CAN BUT THEN  
WE'RE CANCELLED  
BY A HURRICANE!  
IT GETS TO BE  
DEPRESSING, FEMALE  
ANNOUNCER ~ ♪



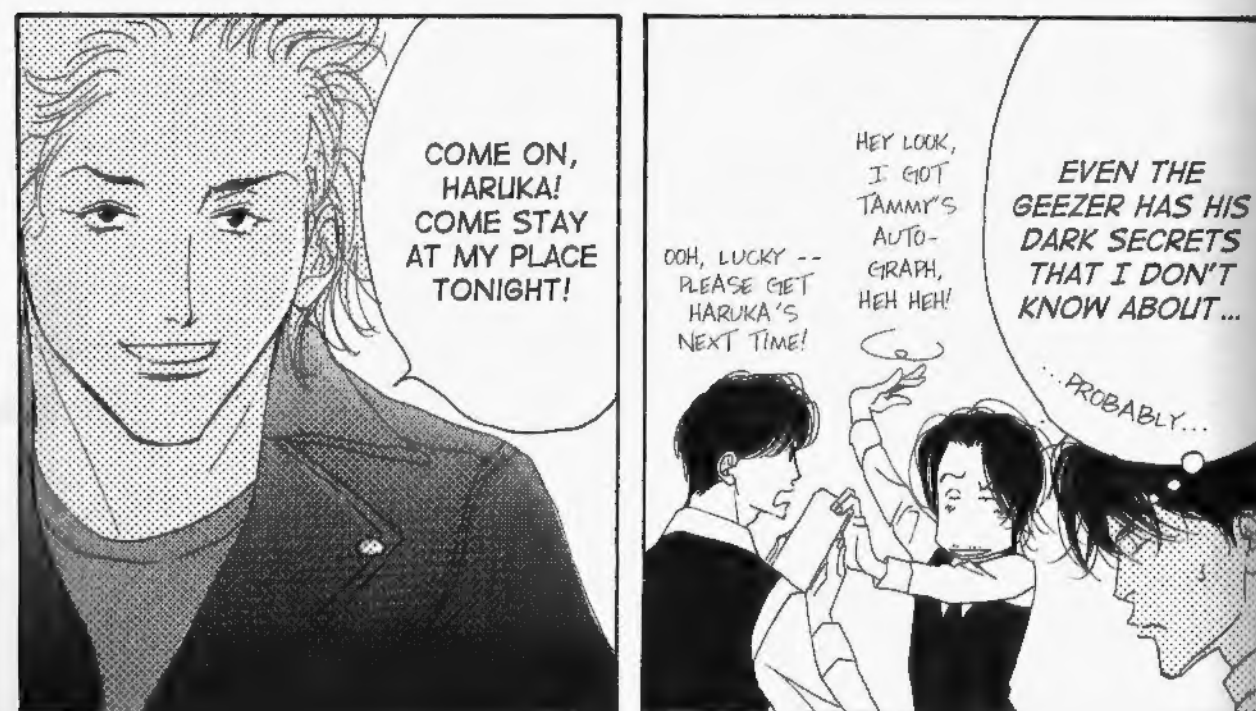


AT MY SECOND ORPHANAGE, I GREW UP WITH BEATINGS. ONE TIME, EVEN THE DIRECTOR OF THE ORPHANAGE CUT ME IN THE CALF WITH A PAIR OF SCISSORS. I'VE COMMITTED EVERY CRIME SHORT OF MURDER, AND THOUGHT I'D SEEN PRETTY MUCH EVERYTHING OF THE DARK SIDE OF THIS WORLD, BUT...



HE LOVED CAKE...AND I WAS FED THE CAKE THAT HE BOUGHT, EVERY SINGLE DAY.

THERE'S ONE THING I REMEMBER ABOUT THE GUY WHO ABDUCTED ME...



COME ON, HARUKA! COME STAY AT MY PLACE TONIGHT!

DOH, LUCKY -- PLEASE GET HARUKA'S NEXT TIME!

HEY LOOK, I GOT TAMMY'S AUTO-GRAPH, HEH HEH!

EVEN THE GEEZER HAS HIS DARK SECRETS THAT I DON'T KNOW ABOUT...

...PROBABLY...



...IT WAS WHEN I WAS IN THE FOURTH GRADE.

HUH?

OH, RIGHT!

HEY, EIJI! SINCE THE SHOP'S CLOSED TOMORROW ANYWAY, YOU COME WITH US TO HELP WITH THE SETUP.



SO WHEN KEIICHIRO...TACHIBANA WAS FOUND SAFE, MY FATHER REJOICED AS IF I WERE THE ONE WHO HAD BEEN KIDNAPPED THE WHOLE TIME, REPEATING, "OH, I'M SO GLAD," OVER AND OVER AGAIN.

"POOR BOY... AN OLDER CHILD LIKE HIM, MISSING FOR TWO WEEKS... IT'S PROBABLY TOO LATE."

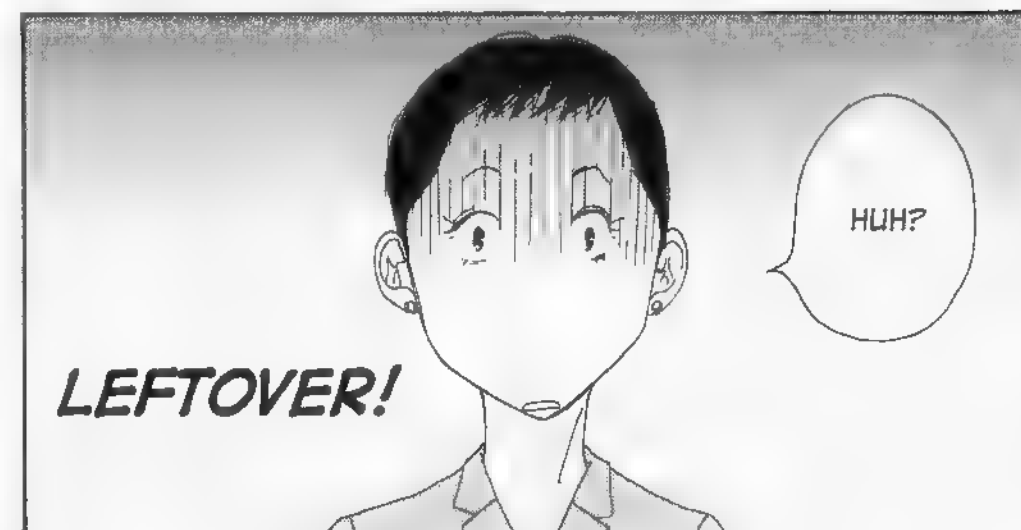
I WAS WATCHING THE NEWS WITH MY FATHER. I REMEMBER HIM TELLING ME, "THIS BOY IS THE SAME AGE AS YOU, YUSUKE."

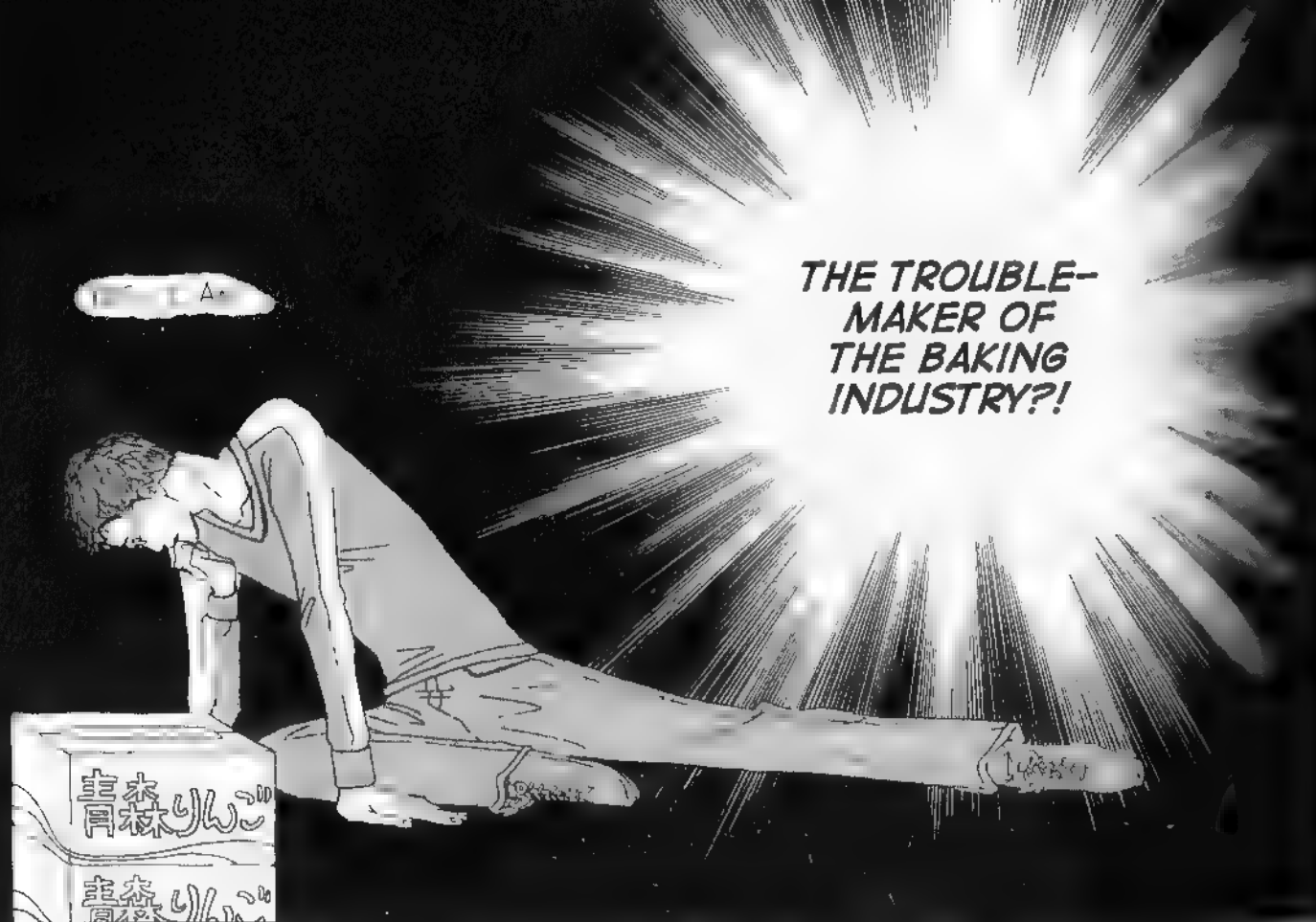


I'VE NEVER KNOWN MY PARENTS' FACES.

...THE AFTERMATH MUST HAVE BEEN DIFFICULT... FOR BOTH TACHIBANA AND HIS RELATIVES.

BUT TACHIBANA WAS HELD CAPTIVE BY HIS ABDUCTOR FOR A WHOLE MONTH. THEY SAY THE STRESS OF AN ORDEAL LIKE THIS IS SO GREAT THAT SOME ADULTS EVEN DEVELOP CANCER AFTERWARD, SO...





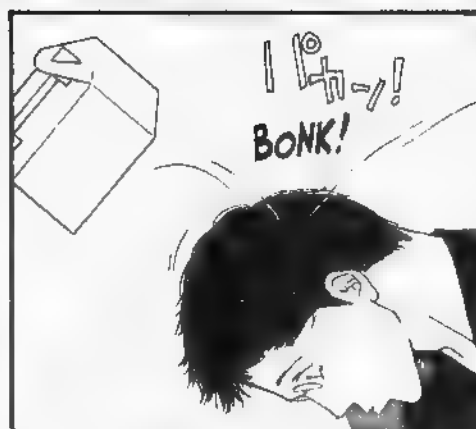
THE TROUBLE-  
MAKER OF  
THE BAKING  
INDUSTRY?!



NAKAI!!

LET ME  
GO, BOSS!  
BECAUSE  
OF HIM,  
OUR  
STORE...

ALL  
BECAUSE  
OF THIS  
HOMO...!!

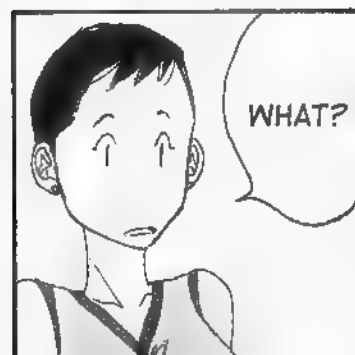


BONK!



YOU'RE IN  
THE WAY!  
DON'T LIE  
IN THE  
MIDDLE  
OF THE  
AISLE!!

STOP IT,  
NAKAI!!

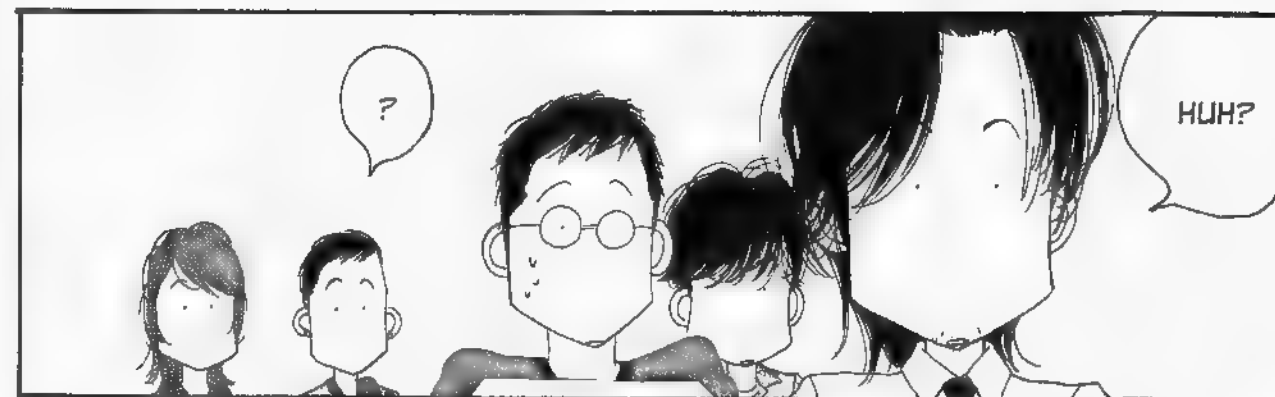


WHAT?



W-WHY?  
A TROUBLE-  
MAKER...?  
BUT ISN'T HE  
A GENIUS  
PASTRY CHEF?

YES...NO...  
IT'S A LONG  
STORY.



?

HUH?



HE'S  
HERE...!!

HERE...



I  
KNOW!  
DON'T  
SAY IT!

TWO-  
THIRDS...?!  
COULD IT  
BE THAT  
YOU'RE...?!

A-ABOUT  
2/3 OF  
THEM.

THAT'S RIGHT!  
ONO, HOW  
MANY OF THESE  
SHOPS THAT ARE  
HERE TODAY  
HAVE YOU  
WORKED AT?!

WHAT?  
WHAT?



OH!!

D-DO YOU  
GET THE  
FEELING  
WE'RE BEING  
NOTICED?  
OR RATHER,  
GLARED AT...?

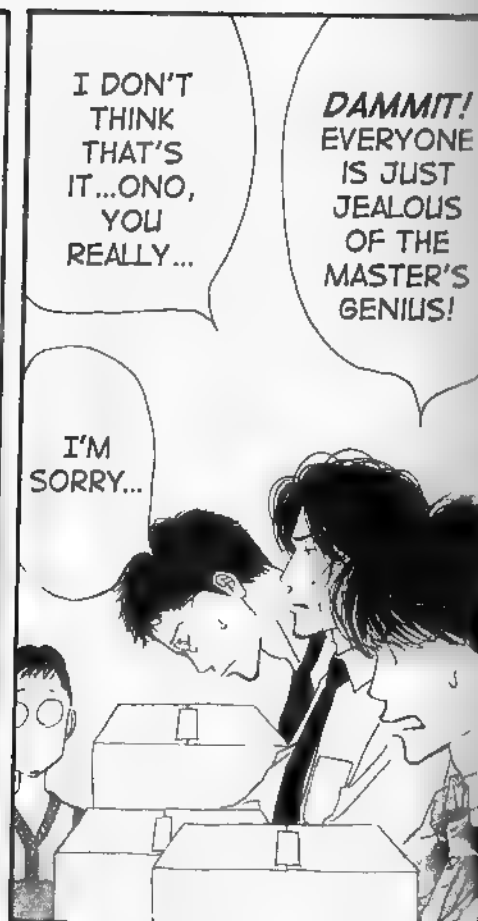


LEAVE  
NAKATSU!  
KAGAMI, GO!

GAY...

YES! NOW,  
OVER HERE  
IS THE  
BOOTH FOR  
"ANTIQUE"...

SOB



I DON'T  
THINK  
THAT'S  
IT...ONO,  
YOU  
REALLY...

DAMMIT!  
EVERYONE  
IS JUST  
JEALOUS  
OF THE  
MASTER'S  
GENIUS!

I'M  
SORRY...



IT'S QUITE  
ALL RIGHT.  
I APOLOGIZE  
FOR OUR  
LITTLE RUNT --  
HE'S NOTHING  
BUT TROUBLE.

I'M  
SORRY.  
HE'S JUST  
SO HOT-  
HEADED...

HEH! WHAT,  
ARE YOU  
ANOTHER  
ONE OF  
THEM  
HOMOS?!



GAY...



KANDA,  
PLEASE,  
STOP!

WHAT DO YOU  
THINK YOU'RE  
DOING TO THE  
MASTER? AND  
BESIDES, HE'S  
NOT A HOMO --  
HE'S A GAY!!

DON'T  
YELL "GAY"  
SO LOUD



IT'S  
FINE...

PLEASE,  
JUST  
GO.

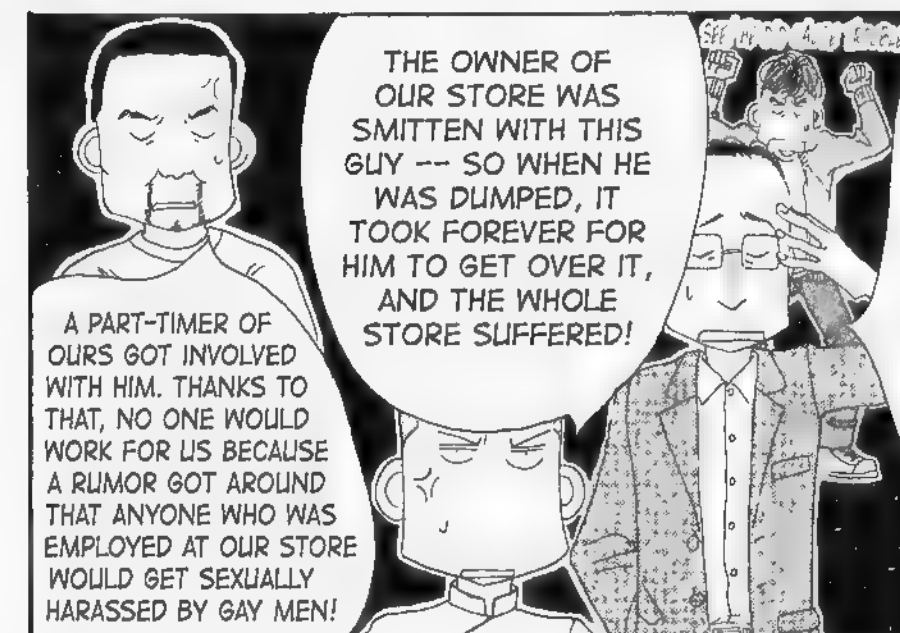


I'M  
SORRY  
...!



TACHIBANA~!!

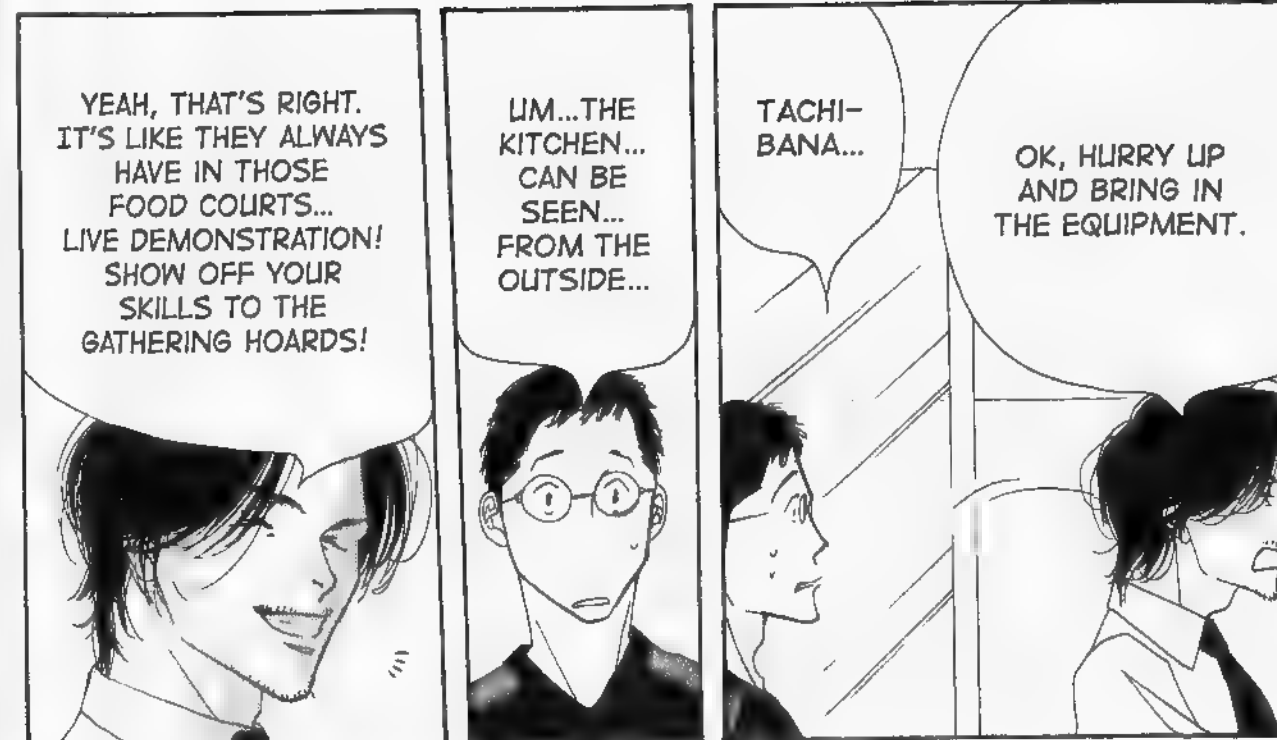
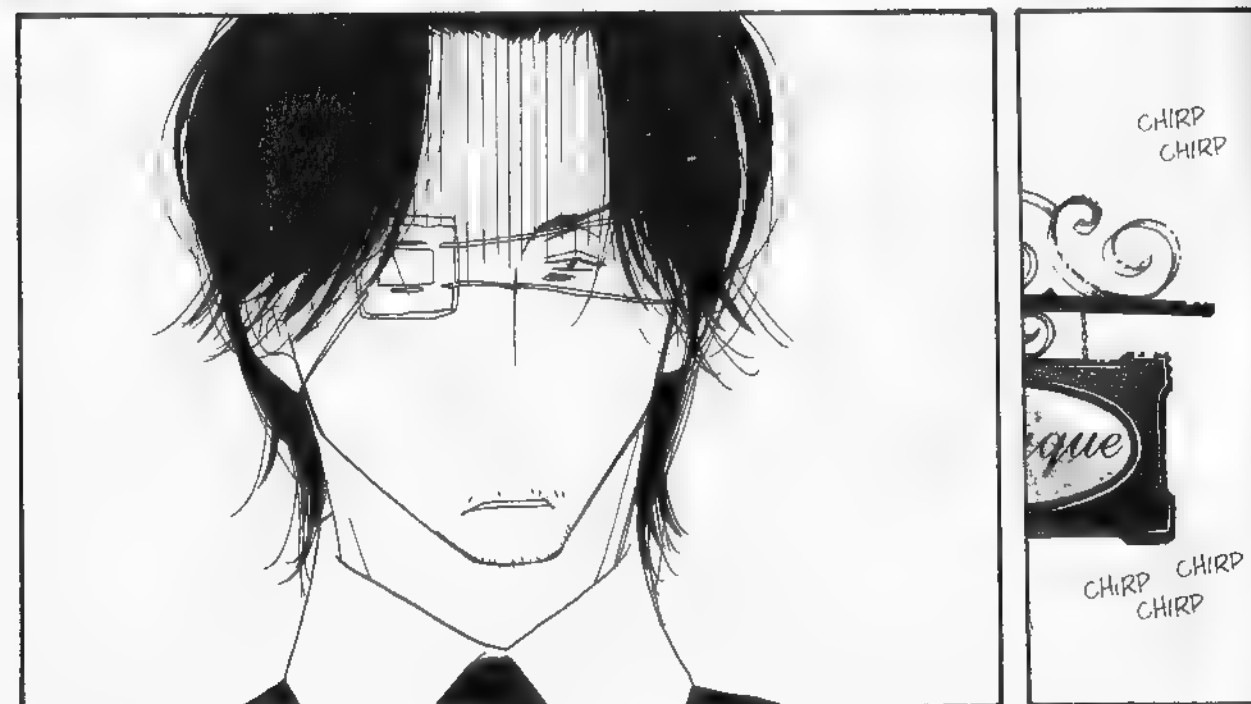
WHAT DID YOU  
CALL ME?! I'M A  
TRIED-AND-TRUE  
LADIES-MAN,  
YOU JERK!



THE OWNER OF  
OUR STORE WAS  
SMITTEN WITH THIS  
GUY -- SO WHEN HE  
WAS DUMPED, IT  
TOOK FOREVER FOR  
HIM TO GET OVER IT,  
AND THE WHOLE  
STORE SUFFERED!

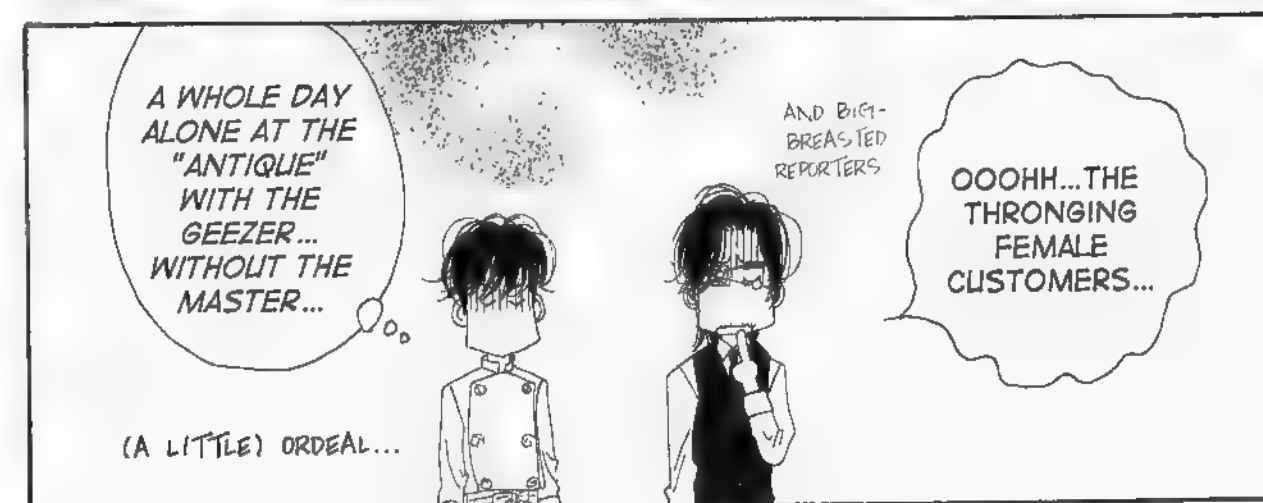
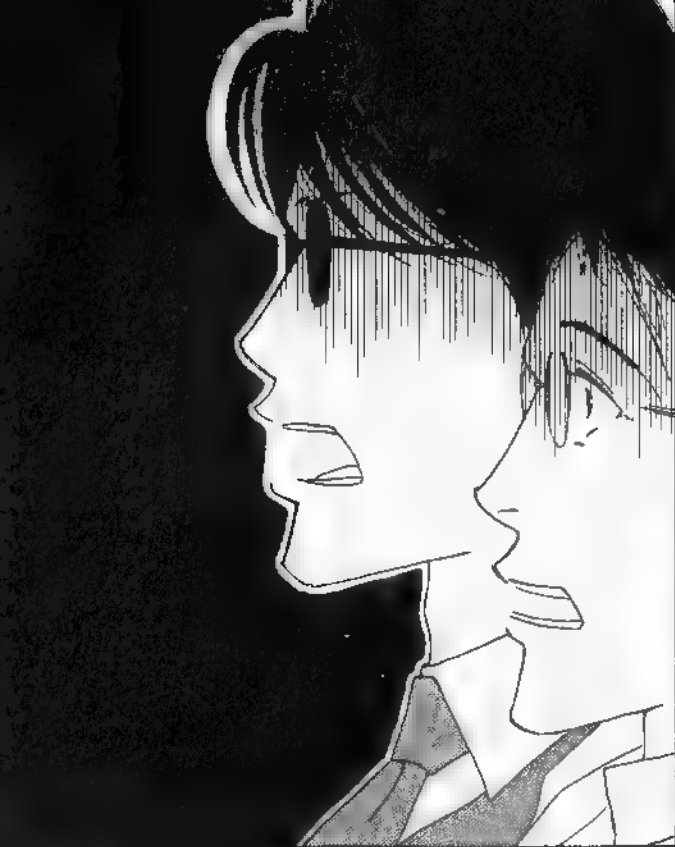
A PART-TIMER OF  
OURS GOT INVOLVED  
WITH HIM. THANKS TO  
THAT, NO ONE WOULD  
WORK FOR US BECAUSE  
A RUMOR GOT AROUND  
THAT ANYONE WHO WAS  
EMPLOYED AT OUR STORE  
WOULD GET SEXUALLY  
HARASSED BY GAY MEN!

IT'S TRUE HE'S  
TALENTED...HE'S A  
GENIUS. BUT WHEN TWO  
OF MY CHEFS BROKE OUT  
IN A HUGE FIGHT OVER  
HIM, AND ALL THREE --  
ONO INCLUDED -- WERE  
LET GO AT ONCE, WE  
STRUGGLED FOR MONTHS  
TO FIND AND TRAIN THEIR  
REPLACEMENTS...



**DEPARTMENT STORE CUSTOMERS...  
WHICH MEANS...MOSTLY WOMEN...**





"REALLY~?  
YOU COULDN'T  
BE A CAREER  
WOMAN,  
SEMPAI?"

...THE REASON THEY REJECTED ME AT  
NHK MUST BE BECAUSE OF MY EXTREME  
BEAUTY AND LARGE BREASTS, BOTH MORE  
WORTHY FOR A MODEL IN A PHOTO MAG  
THAN A NEWSCASTER...THAT KIND OF THING  
CAN BE A MINUS FOR AN ANNOUNCER'S  
IMAGE, YOU KNOW? BECAUSE IT DOESN'T  
MAKE YOU LOOK INTELLIGENT, SEE? BUT  
OF COURSE I COULD NEVER BECOME THE  
TYPE OF WORKAHOLIC CAREER WOMAN  
WITH HARD EYES AND NO SHRED OF  
FEMININITY LEFT IN HER, EITHER!"

"CONGRATULATIONS,  
NAKATSU SEMPAI...  
I HEARD YOU MADE IT  
IN TO TELE-NICHI..."

"OH, IT'S NOTHING TO  
BE CONGRATULATED  
ABOUT-- AFTER ALL, IT'S  
JUST A COMMERCIAL  
BROADCASTING STATION  
AND IT'S THE SAME  
TELE-NICHI THAT'S  
COMMONLY CALLED  
"THE VARIETY SHOW  
CHANNEL," YOU KNOW?"  
=SIGH=

THEN I WOULD  
BE FORCED  
TO RETIRE FOR  
MARRIAGE...AT  
THE VERY LEAST,  
I WOULD NEVER  
WANT TO BE A  
WOMAN OVER  
28 CONTINUING  
TO WORK SIMPLY  
BECAUSE SHE  
CAN'T FIND A  
MAN!"

"WELL, I'M OFTEN MISTAKEN FOR ONE BECAUSE  
OF MY INTELLIGENCE, BUT INSIDE, I'M JUST  
AN ORDINARY, FEMININE GIRL. OF COURSE, MY  
OBVIOUS TALENT SHOWS THROUGH NO MATTER  
HOW I TRY TO HIDE IT, SO IF IT HAPPENS  
TO LAND ME A JOB AS A NEWSCASTER THEN I  
WOULD HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO ACCEPT...BUT  
EVEN THEN, I WOULD HANDLE MY WORK  
AS NATURALLY AND ELEGANTLY AS I COULD. WITH  
MY YOUTHFUL FACE AND CUTE LOOKS, SOME  
YOUNG EXECUTIVE WILL PROBABLY GET HOOKED  
ON ME--AND IF HE SHOULD SAY TO ME, 'THERE  
ARE MANY WOMEN WHO CAN BECOME THIS  
STATION'S ANNOUNCER, BUT THERE IS ONLY  
ONE WOMAN IN THE WORLD WHO  
CAN BECOME MY WIFE,'

AND NOW,  
HERE IT IS -  
THE OPENING  
DAY OF THE  
FAIR!

SOON-  
TO-BE  
MARRIED.  
CURRENTLY 27  
YEARS OLD

NO PLANS  
FOR MARRIAGE.  
CURRENTLY  
28 YEARS OLD



BREAK-  
FAST.

WHAT  
THE HELL...?  
WHY ARE YOU  
CROAKING LIKE  
A STRANGLER  
FROG?!

IT KEEPS  
SEPARATING...

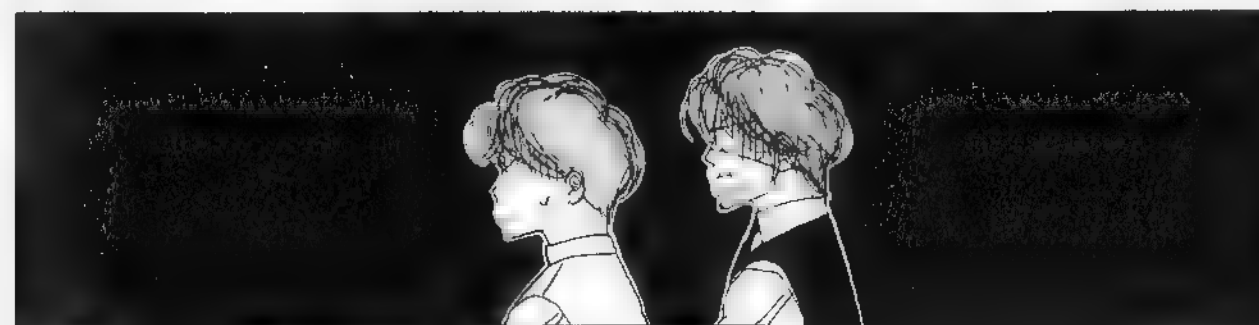


NO MATTER HOW  
MANY TIMES I TRY,  
THE RASPBERRY PURÉE  
AND THE BUTTER  
KEEP SEPARATING!  
I'M FOLLOWING THE  
MASTER'S RECIPE  
EXACTLY, BUT...



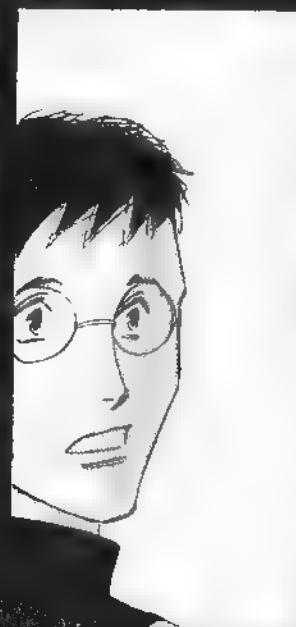
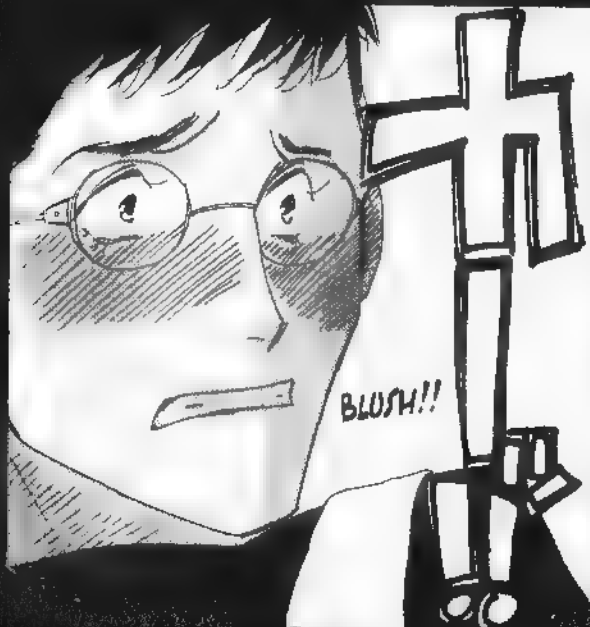
...IT'S NOT  
COMBINING.

WHAT?! BUT THAT'S A  
LIMITED-TIME SEASONAL  
PASTRY WE'RE OFFERING---  
A SIGNATURE ITEM OF OUR  
STORE! DO SOMETHING...!  
ISN'T THERE ANYTHING  
WRITTEN IN ONO'S...?

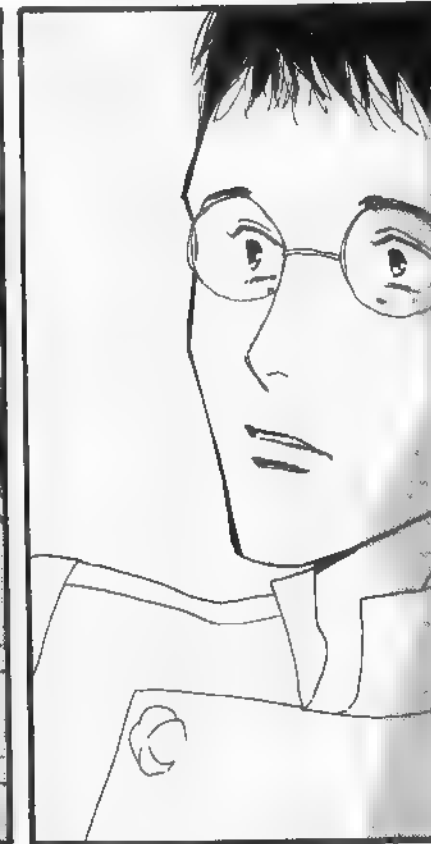
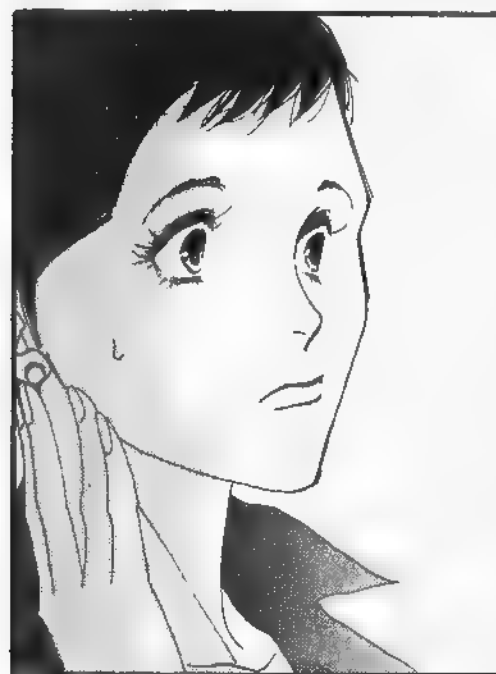


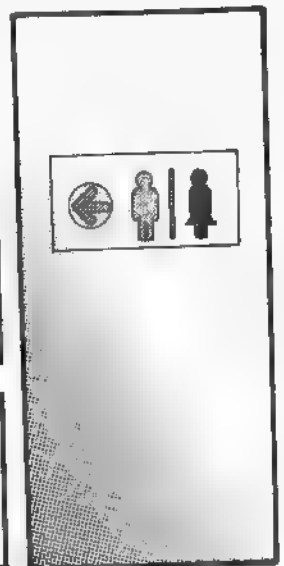
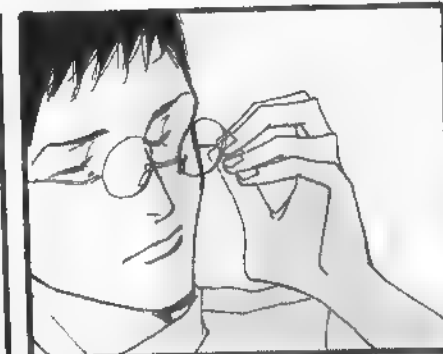
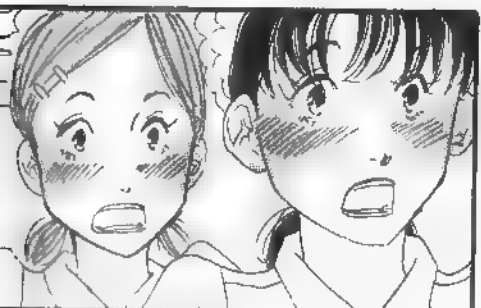
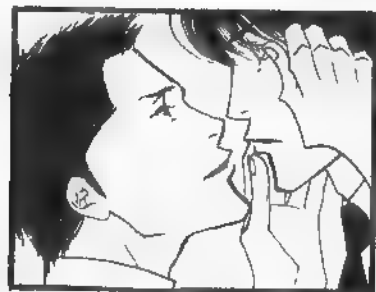
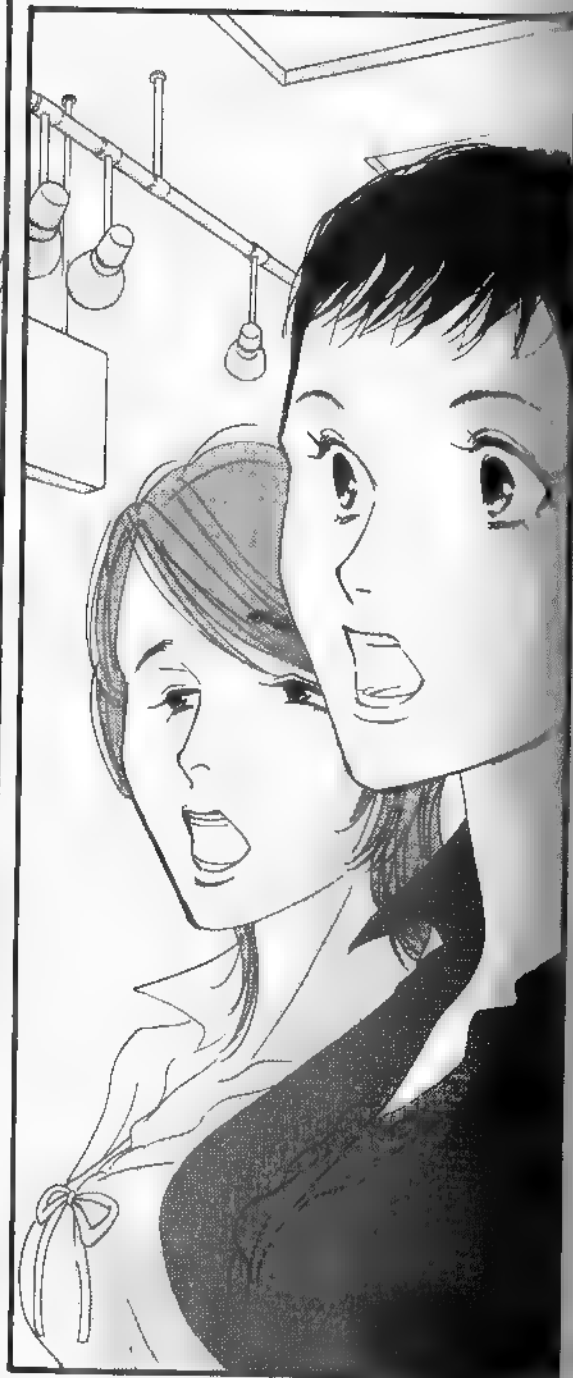


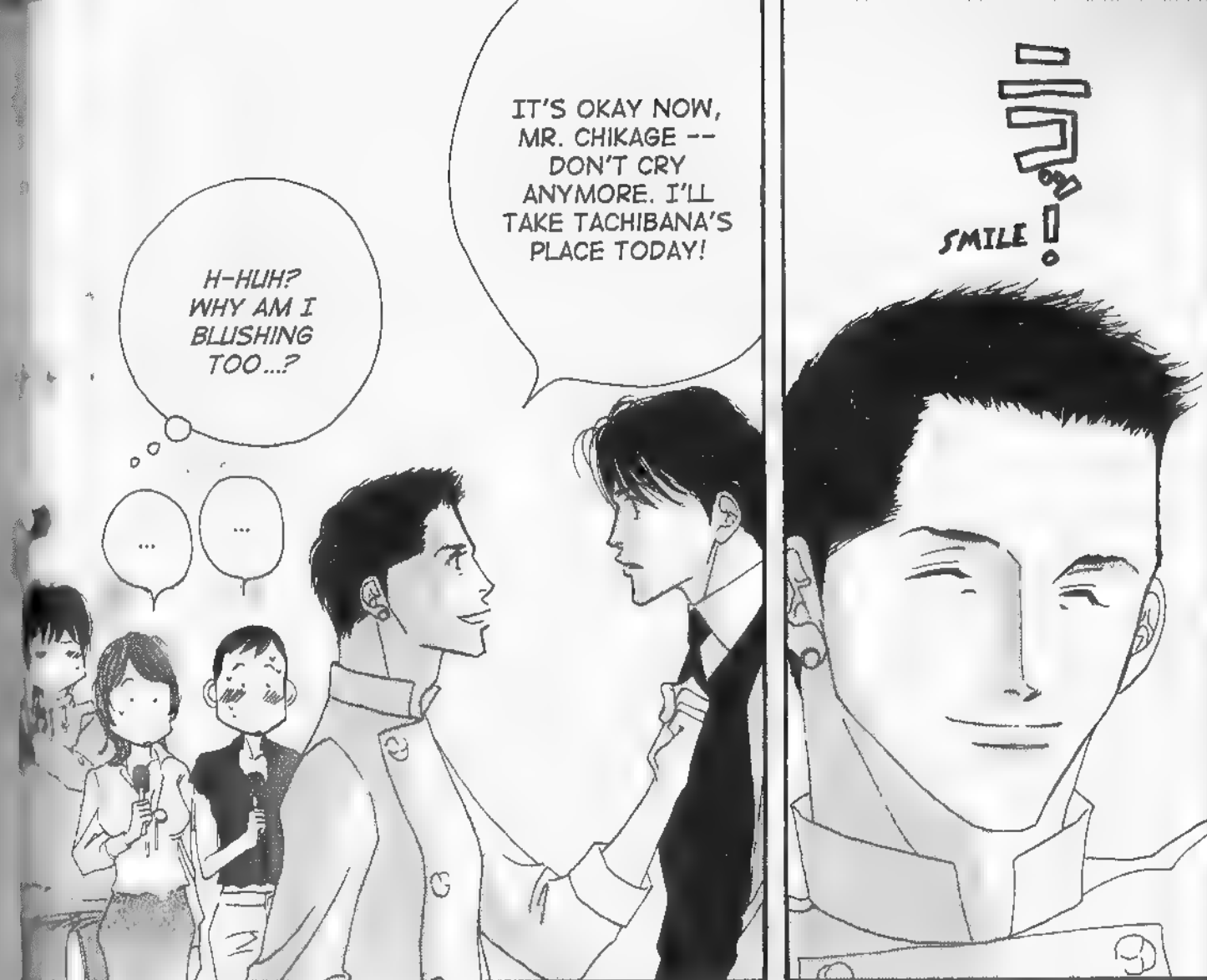
I WAS A FRESH-MAN IN HIGH SCHOOL



Recipe 11 (part 2)



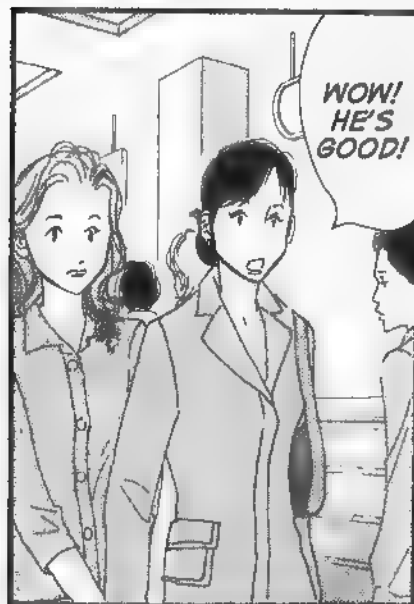




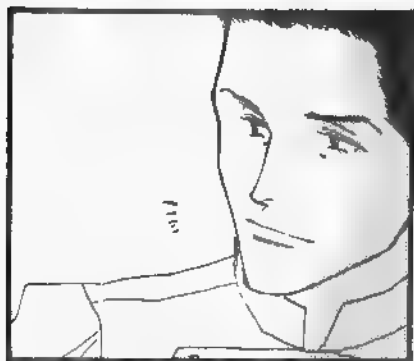


SEE? GOT IT,  
ONE PARFAIT  
AND A CREPE!

IT WORKED, MR.  
ONO! I DID EXACTLY  
WHAT YOU TOLD ME  
TO, AND IT WORKED  
PERFECTLY! TWO  
ORDERS -- A PARFAIT  
AND A CREPE!

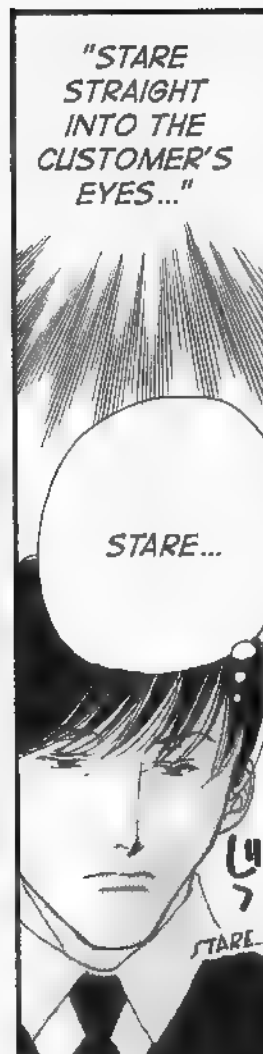


WOW!  
HE'S  
GOOD!



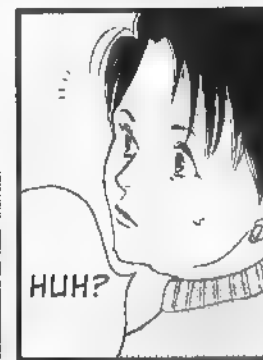
ONCE YOU  
HAVE TASTED  
IT, YOU WILL  
UNDERSTAND...

"MOVE YOUR FACE  
IN CLOSE AND SAY  
IN A HUSHED VOICE,  
'ONCE YOU HAVE  
TASTED IT, YOU WILL  
UNDERSTAND.'"



"STARE  
STRAIGHT  
INTO THE  
CUSTOMER'S  
EYES..."

STARE...



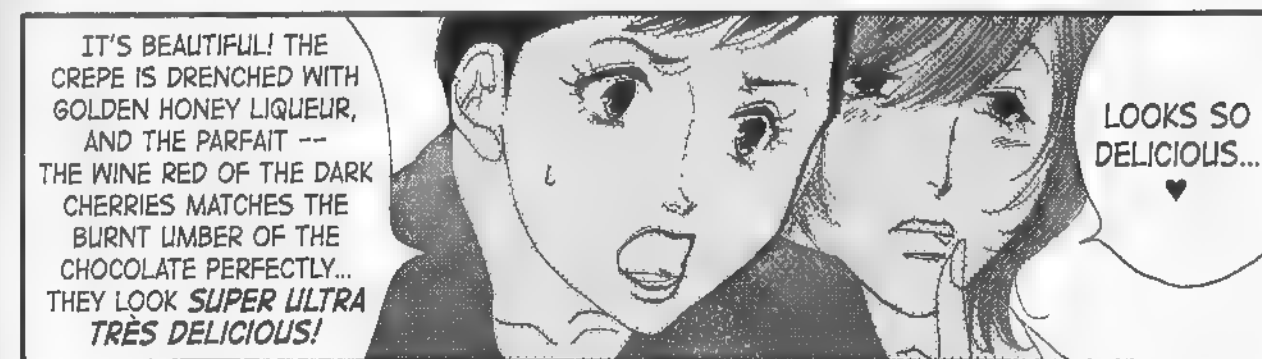
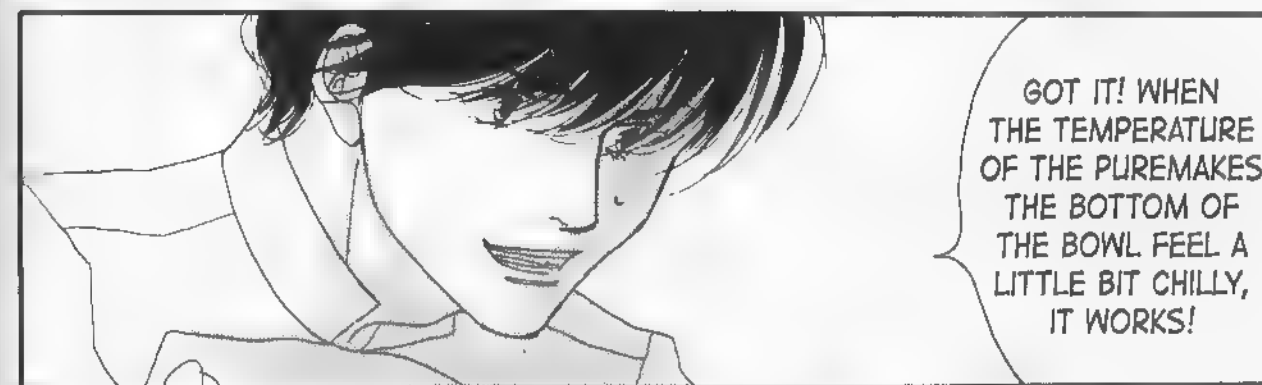
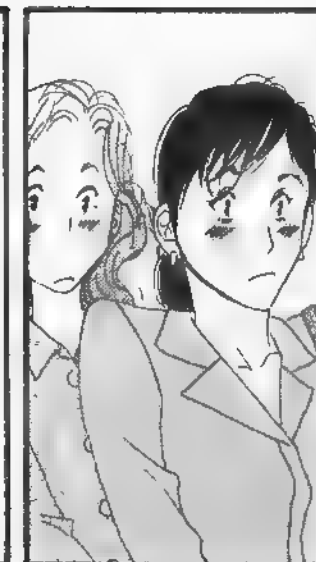
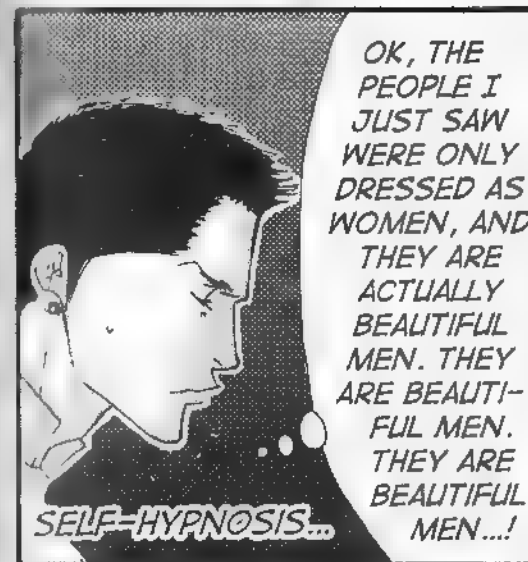
HUH?

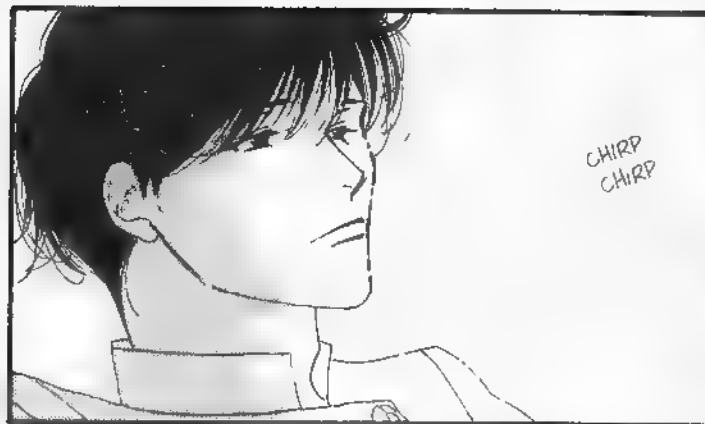


YES,  
ONCE YOU  
HAVE  
TASTED IT,  
YOU WILL  
UNDER-  
STAND,  
MADAM.

UM! DOES THAT  
GO FOR THIS  
"FAIR-ONLY BUCK-  
WHEAT-FLOUR  
CREPE WITH  
HONEY AND ICE  
CREAM" TOO?!

I'LL  
HAVE  
IT...!





CHIRP  
CHIRP



OH, HELLO! ARE  
YOU GOING OUT?  
YES, DOWN TO  
YUZAWA IN  
KICHI JO! OH, IS  
THAT SO?



OH!

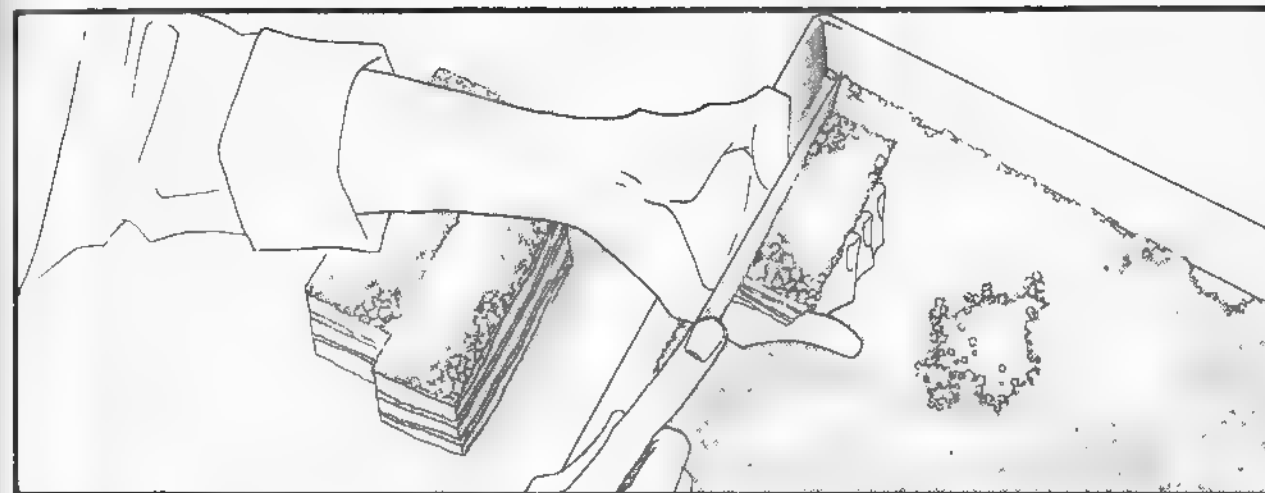


ARE YOU  
RUNNING A  
BAKERY 'CUZ  
YOU'RE  
TRYING TO  
CATCH THE  
GUY WHO  
ABDUCTED  
YOU?

HM?

...HEY

GEEZER.



...12  
O'CLOCK,  
ON-THE-  
DOT!



DÉLICE AU  
FRAMBOISE...  
READY!!



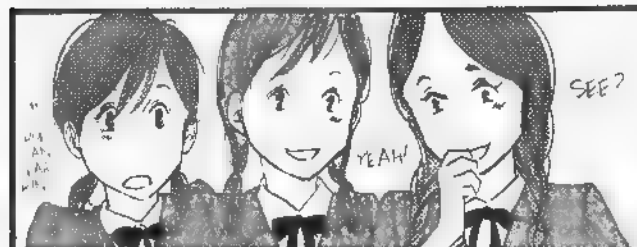
MADE IT...

WE MADE  
IT...IT'S  
OPENING  
TIME...



OKAY.

ANOTHER  
ORDER...ONE  
CREPE AND  
A THREE-  
ASSORTMENT  
PLATTER,  
PLEASE.



SEE?

YEAH!

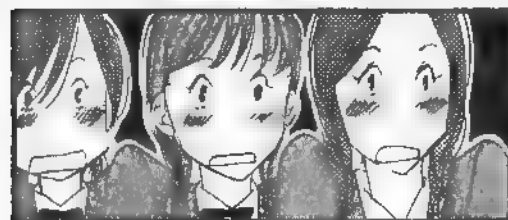


COULD YOU  
COME OVER  
HERE AND  
SMILE WITH  
ME FOR A  
SECOND?

MR.  
CHIKAGE,  
MR.  
CHIKAGE.

HUH?

YES?



THE AFTERNOON HOUR  
HAS PASSED INTO EVENING,  
AND THE POPULARITY OF  
THESE SHOPS CONTINUES  
UNABATED! THIS HAS BEEN  
NAKATSU AND KAGAMI,  
REPORTING TO YOU FROM  
THE DELICIOUS CAKE SHOPS  
IN THE DEPARTMENT  
STORE SUB-LEVEL!

SQUEAL!!

OH, ANOTHER  
THREE HIGH-  
SCHOOL  
GIRLS JUST  
WENT IN...



THANK YOU  
FOR WAITING  
HERE IS YOUR  
AFTERNOON  
TEA SET.



?



CHIRP  
CHIRP  
CHIRP..



IT'S  
LIKE...I  
DON'T...

HMMM...

I DON'T  
REALLY  
KNOW  
HOW TO  
EXPLAIN IT...

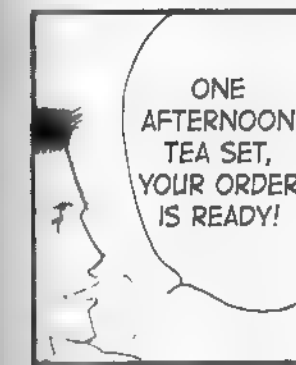


SURE.



SO, THERE  
ARE SOME  
THINGS THAT  
EVEN YOU  
CAN'T  
EXPLAIN?

...

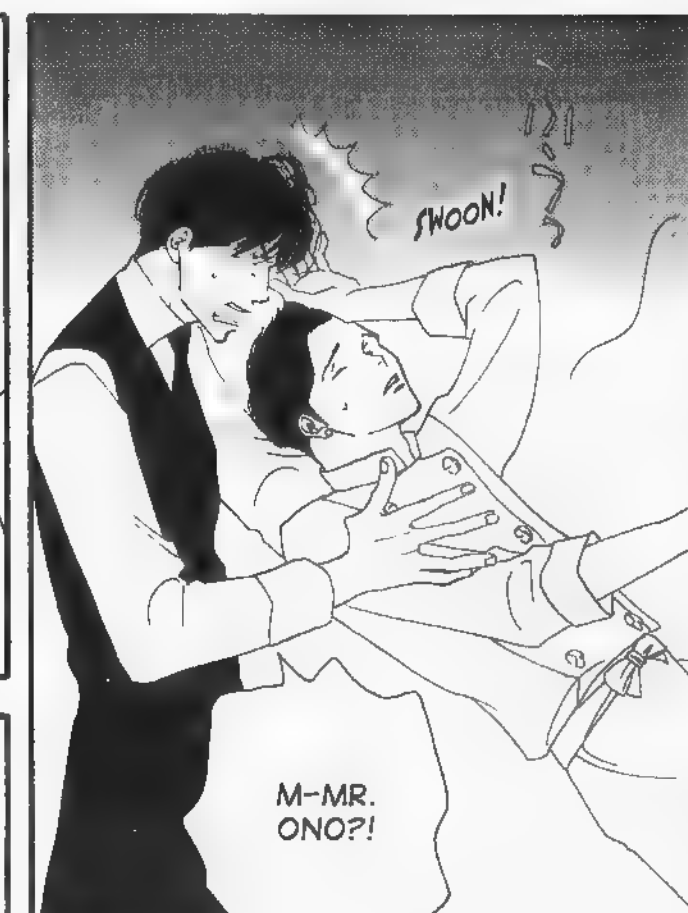
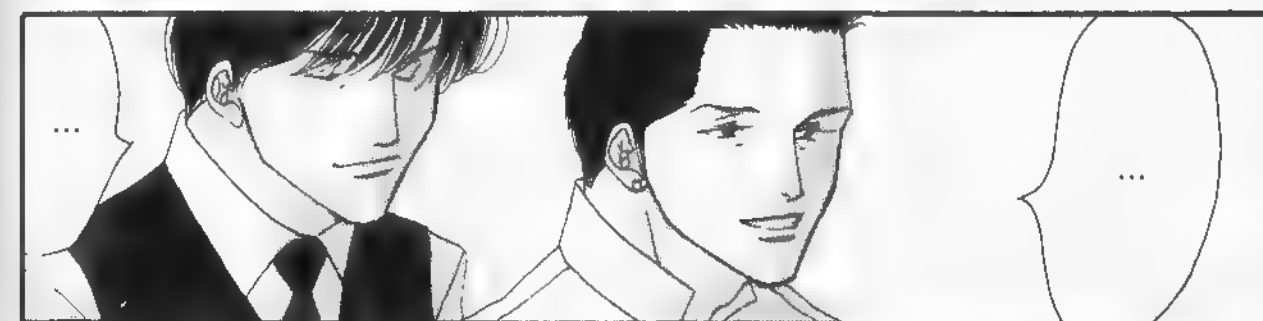
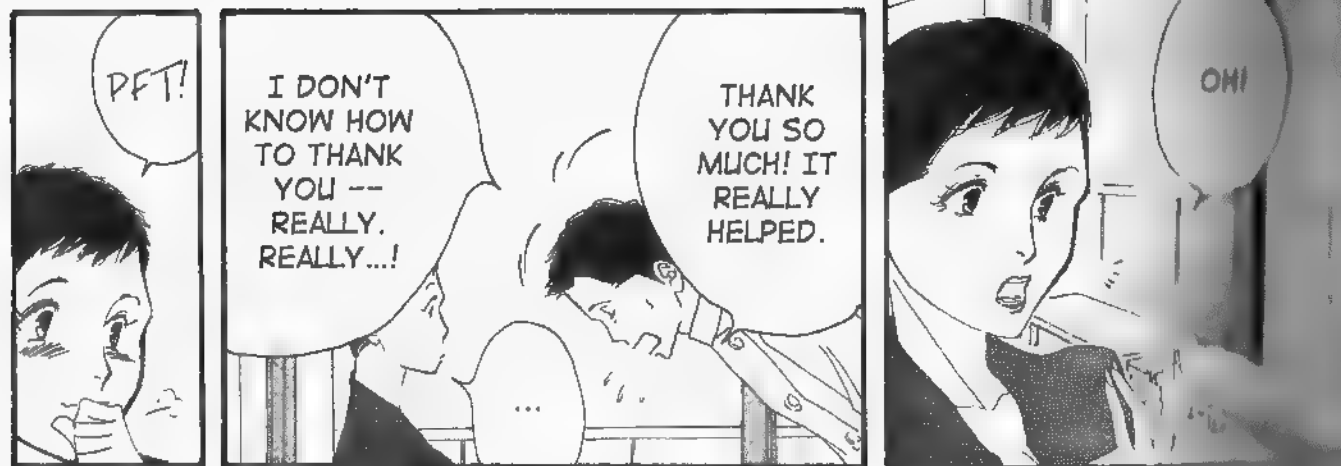


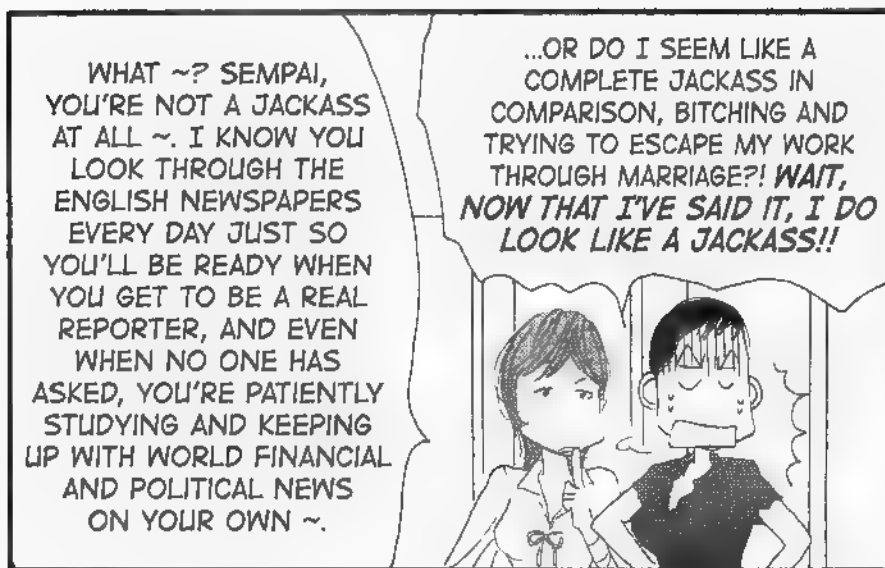
ONE  
AFTERNOON  
TEA SET,  
YOUR ORDER  
IS READY!



YUP.

OH.





WHAT ~? SEMPai, YOU'RE NOT A JACKASS AT ALL ~. I KNOW YOU LOOK THROUGH THE ENGLISH NEWSPAPERS EVERY DAY JUST SO YOU'LL BE READY WHEN YOU GET TO BE A REAL REPORTER, AND EVEN WHEN NO ONE HAS ASKED, YOU'RE PATIENTLY STUDYING AND KEEPING UP WITH WORLD FINANCIAL AND POLITICAL NEWS ON YOUR OWN ~.

...OR DO I SEEM LIKE A COMPLETE JACKASS IN COMPARISON, BITCHING AND TRYING TO ESCAPE MY WORK THROUGH MARRIAGE?! WAIT, NOW THAT I'VE SAID IT, I DO LOOK LIKE A JACKASS!!

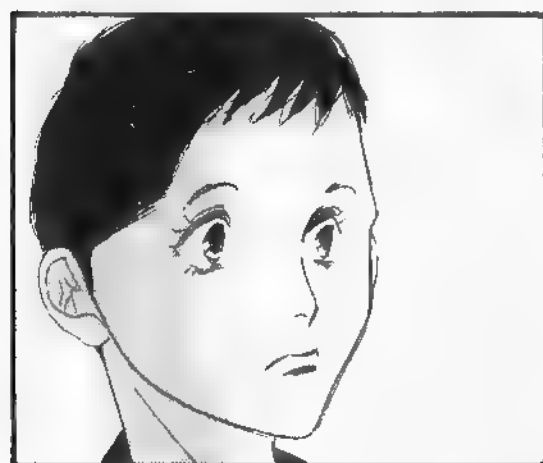


IS IT ME

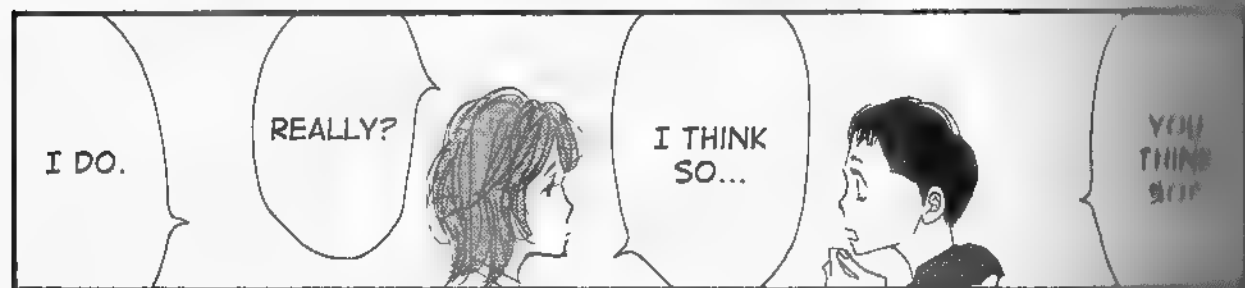


WHAAT-? BUT, SO WHAT? WHAT'S WRONG WITH A BIG-BUSTED NEWSCASTER WHO REPORTS THE DAY-TO-DAY TRENDS WITHIN NAGATA CITY~? I THINK YOU'D BE PERFECT, SEMPai~! AND BESIDES...

WAIT, SHH! DON'T SAY THAT, I'M KEEPING IT A SECRET! I MEAN, I'M ONLY DOING THIS VARIETY-PROGRAM-ISH JOB 'CAUSE PEOPLE WILL SCOFF, "WHAT, IS SHE SERIOUSLY AIMING TO BE A NEWS REPORTER?! HA! DON'T MAKE ME LAUGH! I'D NEVER IN A MILLION YEARS MARRY AN AMBITIOUS, CAREER-DRIVEN, THINKS-SHE'S-SO-SMART WOMAN LIKE HER!" AND I DON'T WANT TO HEAR THAT!



...WHAT'S WRONG WITH A COMPETENT WOMAN LOOKING AND ACTING LIKE THE COMPETENT WOMAN SHE IS? I THINK YOU'RE VERY CHARMING THE WAY YOU ARE, SEMPai



I DO.

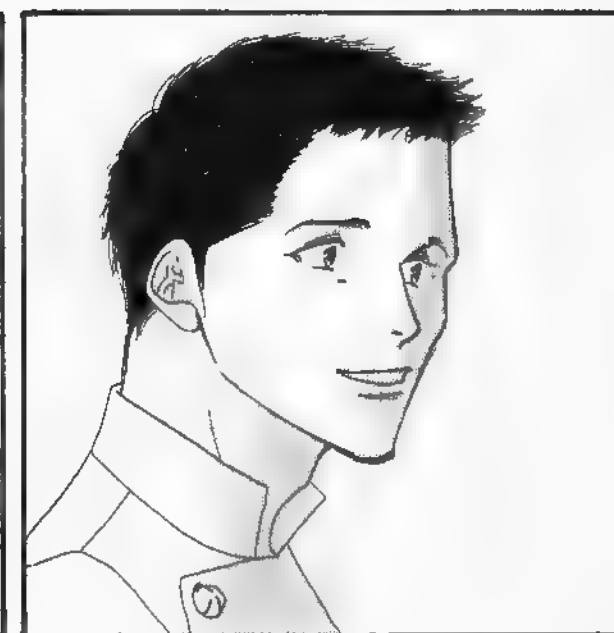
REALLY?

I THINK SO...

YOU THINK SO?

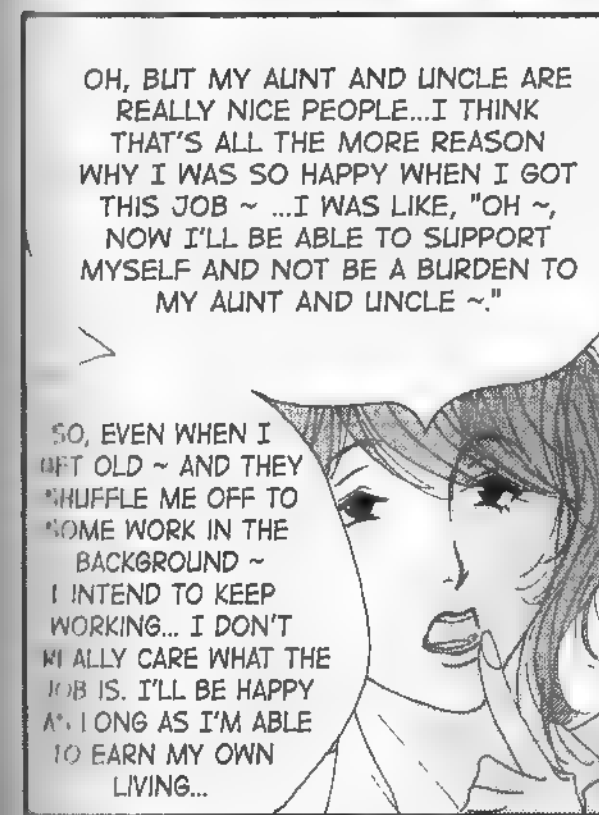


THANK YOU...



HUH? BUT I'M NOT GOING TO BE QUITTING MY JOB.

OHhhh...I'M SUCH A KIND WOMAN, I'M JUST TOO KIND...! CHEERING UP A MAN WHO WON'T EVER MARRY ME, BUYING PAJAMAS FOR A SNEAKY CO-WORKER WHO'S GOING TO LEAVE ME BEHIND AT WORK TO GO OFF AND GET MARRIED...THIS KINDNESS IS WHAT ALWAYS LEAVES ME HOLDING THE SHORT END OF THE STICK!



OH, BUT MY AUNT AND UNCLE ARE REALLY NICE PEOPLE...I THINK THAT'S ALL THE MORE REASON WHY I WAS SO HAPPY WHEN I GOT THIS JOB ~ ...I WAS LIKE, "OH ~, NOW I'LL BE ABLE TO SUPPORT MYSELF AND NOT BE A BURDEN TO MY AUNT AND UNCLE ~."

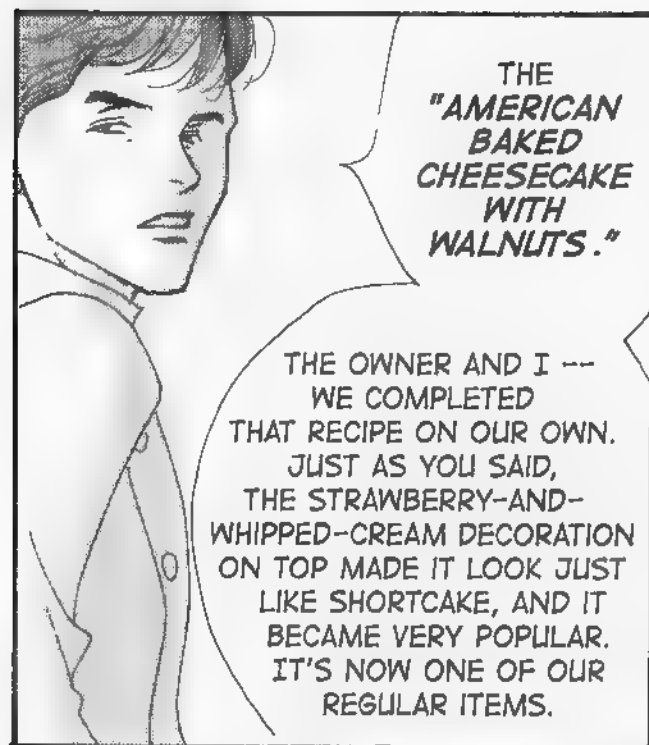
SO, EVEN WHEN I GET OLD ~ AND THEY SHUFFLE ME OFF TO SOME WORK IN THE BACKGROUND ~ I INTEND TO KEEP WORKING... I DON'T REALLY CARE WHAT THE JOB IS. I'LL BE HAPPY AS LONG AS I'M ABLE TO EARN MY OWN LIVING...



THIS CRAPPY JOB?! THIS SUPER-BUSY, ERRATIC JOB?! AND WHY?! ANYWAY, DIDN'T YOU SAY YOU ONLY BECAME AN ANNOUNCER JUST BECAUSE YOU HAPPENED TO GET A POSITION HERE?

UMM ~... MY PARENTS DIED WHEN I WAS IN JUNIOR HIGH...AND I WAS ADOPTED AND RAISED BY MY AUNT AND UNCLE...





THE  
"AMERICAN  
BAKED  
CHEESECAKE  
WITH  
WALNUTS."

THE OWNER AND I ---  
WE COMPLETED  
THAT RECIPE ON OUR OWN.  
JUST AS YOU SAID,  
THE STRAWBERRY-AND-  
WHIPPED-CREAM DECORATION  
ON TOP MADE IT LOOK JUST  
LIKE SHORTCAKE, AND IT  
BECAME VERY POPULAR.  
IT'S NOW ONE OF OUR  
REGULAR ITEMS.



I'VE BEEN  
WORRIED THIS WHOLE  
TIME...ABOUT THAT  
RECIPE FOR THE NEW  
PRODUCT THAT I WAS  
TESTING OUT BEFORE  
I QUIT...IT WAS NEVER  
COMPLETED...

UM.



...IT'S ALSO  
BECAUSE OF  
YOU THAT OUR  
STORE HAS  
BEEN ABLE  
TO COME  
THIS FAR.

PERSONALLY,  
I'M STILL  
GLAD THAT A  
TROUBLE-  
MAKER LIKE  
YOU LEFT OUR  
STORE, BUT...

THAT'S WHEN  
I REALIZED  
THAT ALL THE  
RECIPES WE  
HAVE LEFT ARE  
THE ONES  
YOU CREATED



ACTUALLY,  
TACHIBANA  
IS YOUNGER  
THAN MR.  
CHIKAGE,  
BUT...

GEEZER!  
YOU'RE  
BEING  
IMMATURE!  
REALLY  
IMMATURE!

NOOO, I LIKE IT  
THERE! THE  
CUSTOMERS ARE  
SO NICE TO ME...

CHIKAGE! COME  
ON, CHIKAGE! MY  
STY CLEARED UP  
NOW...LET ME  
TRADE PLACES  
WITH YOU ON THIS  
LAST DAY OF THE  
FAIR, AT LEAST!



THAT'S RIGHT.  
SO, THE PENIS  
OF ANY MAN  
THAT CAN'T  
APPRECIATE  
YOUR CHARMS  
IS...



YOU'RE  
RIGHT!

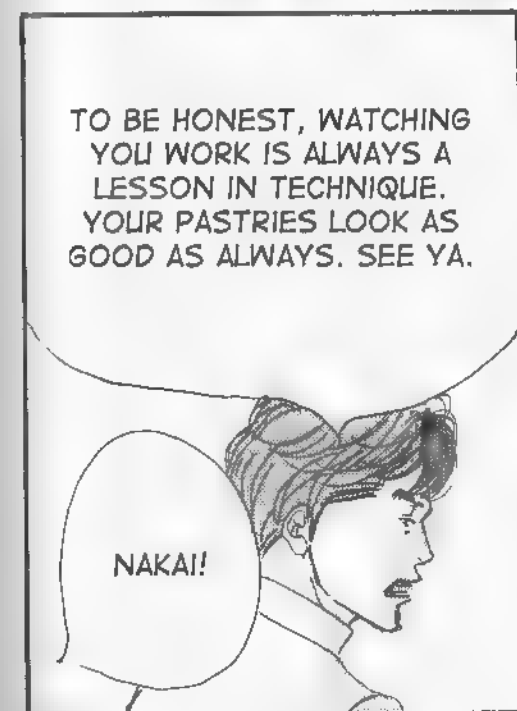


WE GET A NEW  
MARRY KAGAMI  
A ST HAVE SOME BIG  
STONES FOR

YEAHAAH~

IN ANY CASE...  
IN ANY CASE,  
I WOULD NEVER,  
EVER CONSIDER  
EITHER ONE  
OF YOU TO BE  
MY WIFE...

NOT  
WORTHY  
ENOUGH  
FOR ME!!



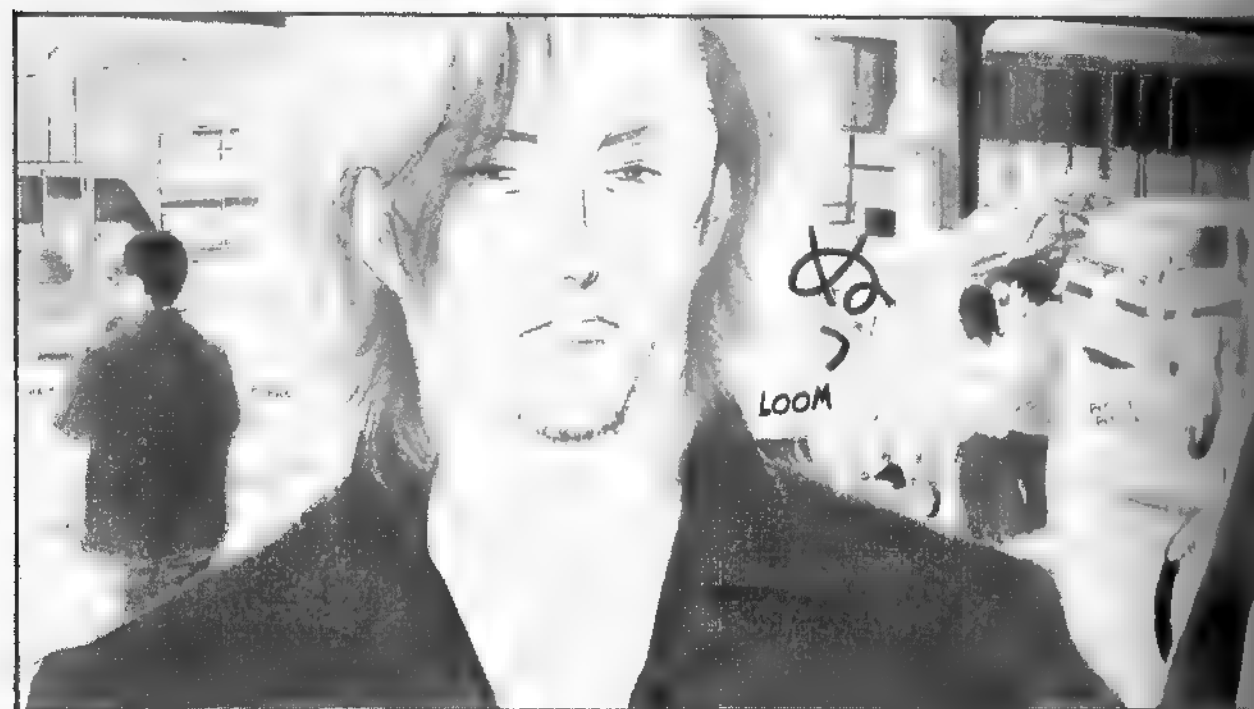
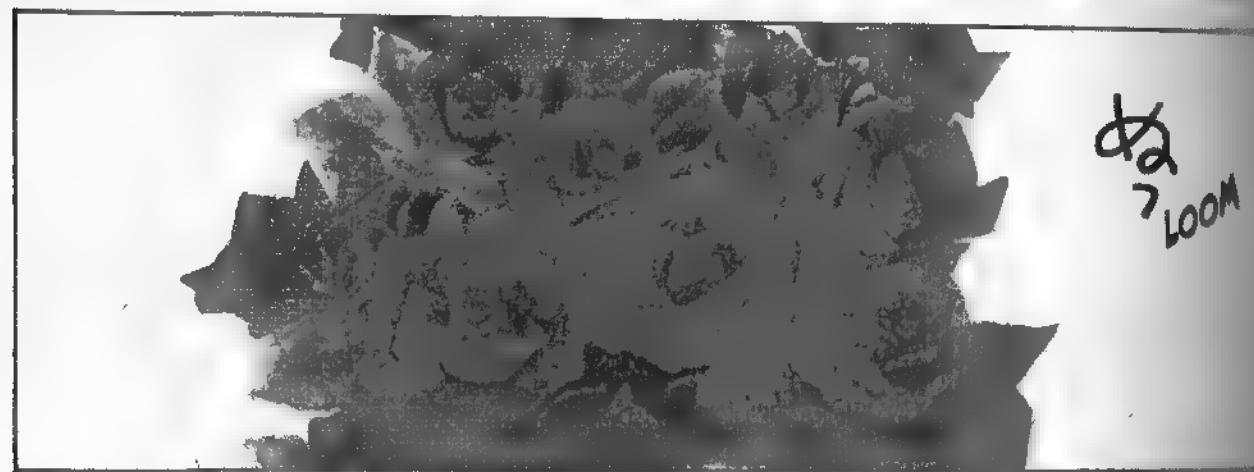
TO BE HONEST, WATCHING  
YOU WORK IS ALWAYS A  
LESSON IN TECHNIQUE.  
YOUR PASTRIES LOOK AS  
GOOD AS ALWAYS. SEE YA.

NAKAI!



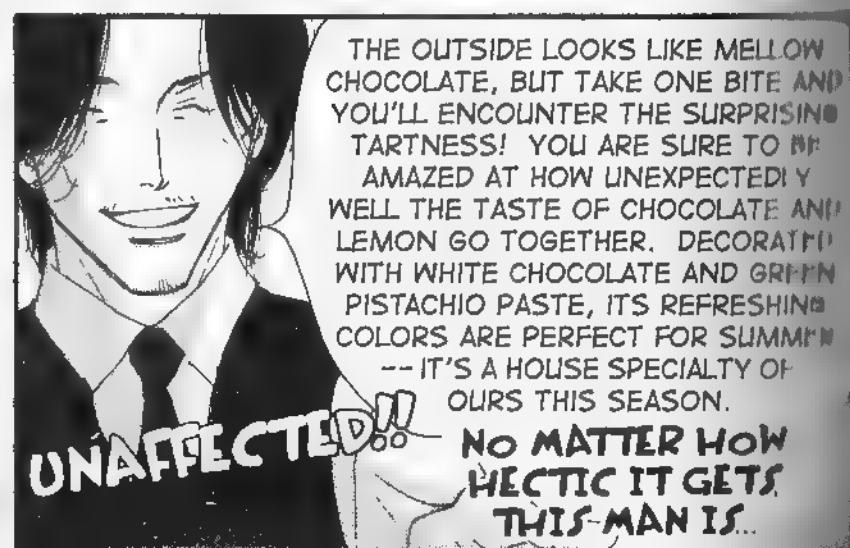
SO, THE  
PLACE YOU  
FINALLY  
SETTLED  
DOWN IN  
TURNED OUT  
TO BE A  
BAKERY OF  
TRADITIONAL  
FRENCH  
PASTRIES...  
IT SUITS  
YOU.

Recipe 12 (part 1)





*Recipe 12* (part 1)





OHH,  
I CAN'T STOP  
SMILING. WE'VE  
SEEN A 1.5-TIMES  
SALES INCREASE  
SINCE WE WERE  
FEATURED IN THAT  
"NEWS PLUS 5"  
SPECIAL!

HEHI!

HEE HEE  
HEE HEE  
HEE!



SO, ONO...SHOULD  
OUR SECOND STORE  
LOCATION BE AOYAMA?  
IS AOYAMA GOOD?  
OR MAYBE KICHIOJI  
WOULD BE BETTER!  
WHAT DO YOU  
THINK?!

BEHOLD THE POWER  
OF MASS MEDIA!  
LOOK, WE'RE EVEN  
MENTIONED IN ALL  
THESE MAGAZINES --  
"NANAKO," "TOKYO  
QUAKER" AND "KATEI  
JIHO (HOUSEHOLD  
NEWS)"!

GEEZER,  
YOU'RE  
DREAMING  
AGAIN!  
DREAMING!!

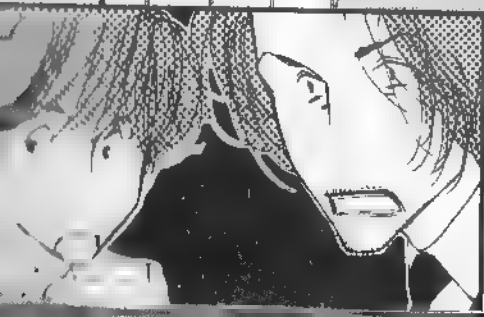


NO, NO,  
KANDA --  
DON'T  
WORRY  
ABOUT  
THAT.

THERE WAS  
A TIME WHEN I  
WAS WORKING 18  
HOURS, FROM  
DAWN TO LATE AT  
NIGHT, AT ABOUT  
A TENTH OF THE  
SALARY I'M  
MAKING NOW. SO  
COMPARED TO  
THOSE DAYS...

WE'RE TOO  
SHORT-HANDED!  
DO YOU KNOW  
HOW BUSY THE  
MASTER IS NOW,  
AS IT IS?!

WHAT ARE YOU TALKING  
ABOUT? EVEN THE  
FAMOUS TARTE SHOP IN  
DAIKANYAMA IS A BRANCH  
OF THE MAIN STORE IN  
SHIZUOKA! WHEN YOU  
THINK ABOUT IT, IT'S NOT  
IMPOSSIBLE FOR US,  
EITHER.



COMING  
RIGHT UP!

WE'RE  
READY  
HERE,  
TOO.



ISN'T IT?!  
ISN'T IT?!

HEY,  
HEY, CHI!  
THIS CAKE  
IS REAALLY  
GOOD!!

REAALLY~?  
THEN I  
WANNA TRY  
ONE TOO!  
CHI, ANOTHER  
LIMONY  
PLEEAASE.



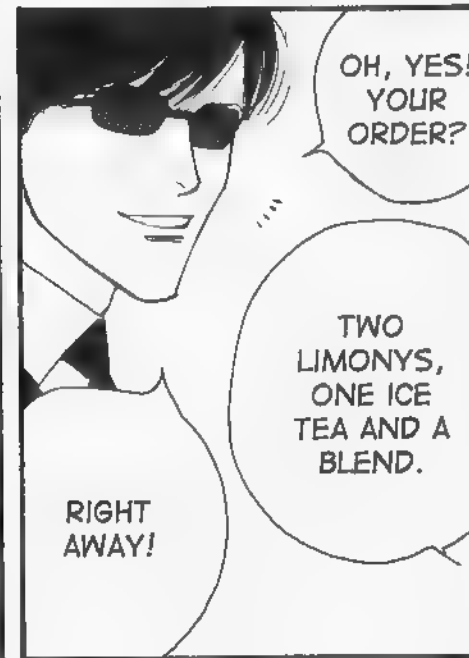
IT'S ALL RIGHT --  
WE'RE IN NO  
HURRY. YOU  
JUST TAKE YOUR  
TIME, DEAR.

UMM...THAT  
MEANS...THE  
NUMBER OF  
LIMONYS IS...

YES!  
THANK YOU  
VERY MUCH!

WAIT  
THAT'S  
NOT GOOD

THREE!  
THAT'S  
THREE  
LIMONYS,  
CHI!



OH, YES!  
YOUR  
ORDER?

TWO  
LIMONYS,  
ONE ICE  
TEA AND A  
BLEND.

RIGHT  
AWAY!



WHEW! WHAT  
A THRONG!  
IT LOOKS LIKE  
IT'S FINALLY  
THINNED OUT.



YOU'RE A TALL ONE FOR A JAPANESE... IS THIS YUSUKE'S SHOP?

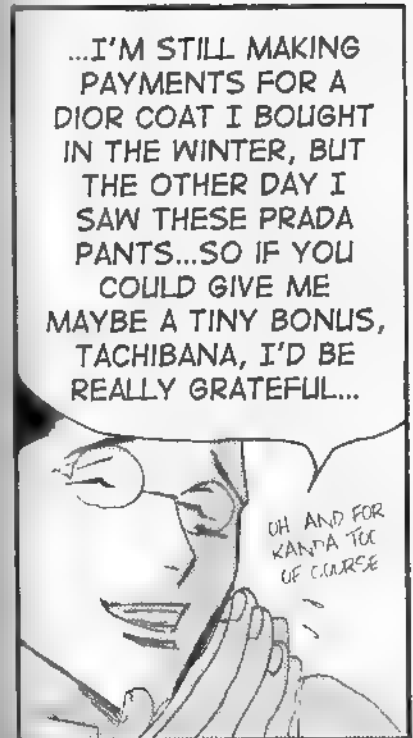
WELCOME!

WELCOME!

WHAT ARE YOU-- A GARÇON OR A BROKEN RECORD? JUDGING FROM YOU AND THE QUALITY OF THE CUSTOMERS THAT JUST LEFT, THIS MUST BE ONE LOUSY SHOP...

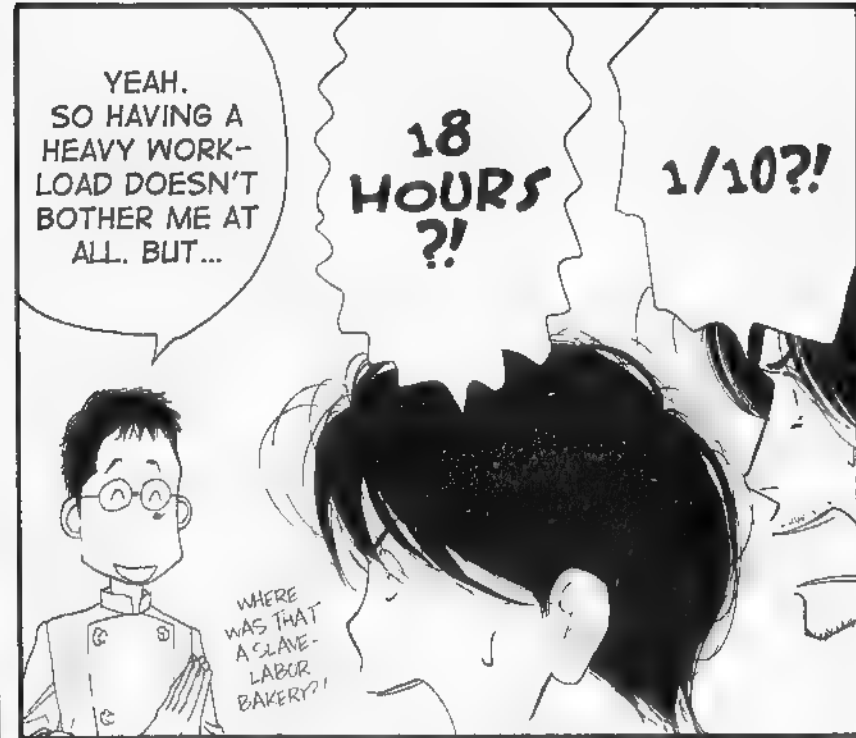
EXCUSE ME! THIS IS MY SHOP!!

IS THIS YUSUKE ONO'S SHOP?



...I'M STILL MAKING PAYMENTS FOR A DIOR COAT I BOUGHT IN THE WINTER, BUT THE OTHER DAY I SAW THESE PRADA PANTS...SO IF YOU COULD GIVE ME MAYBE A TINY BONUS, TACHIBANA, I'D BE REALLY GRATEFUL...

OH AND FOR KANDA TOO OF COURSE



YEAH. SO HAVING A HEAVY WORK-LOAD DOESN'T BOTHER ME AT ALL. BUT...

18 HOURS?!

1/10?!

WHERE WAS THAT A SLAVE-LABOR BAKERY?!



バイバイ! BYE BYE!

WE AWAIT YOUR VISIT.

OK THEN, CHI -- WE'LL COME AGAIN WITH EVERYONE, LIKE WE DID AT CHRIST-MASTIME!



BUT YOU REALLY ARE THE ONLY ONE THAT'S IN IT FOR THE MONEY!

OHH...BUT THEN THAT MAKES ME LOOK LIKE I'M THE ONLY ONE THAT'S IN IT FOR THE MONEY!

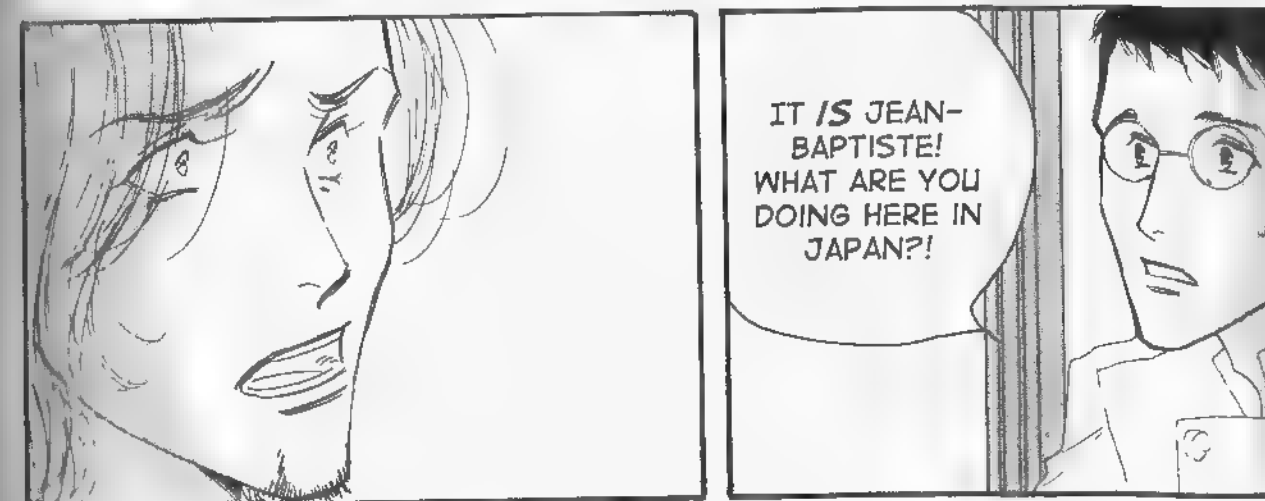
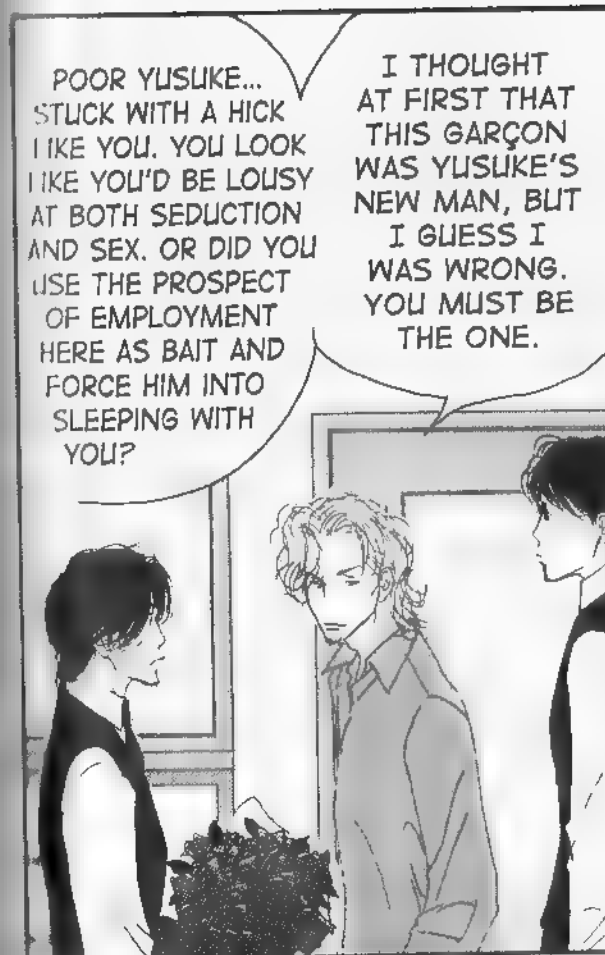
HUH? BUT I DON'T REALLY NEED IT, MASTER.



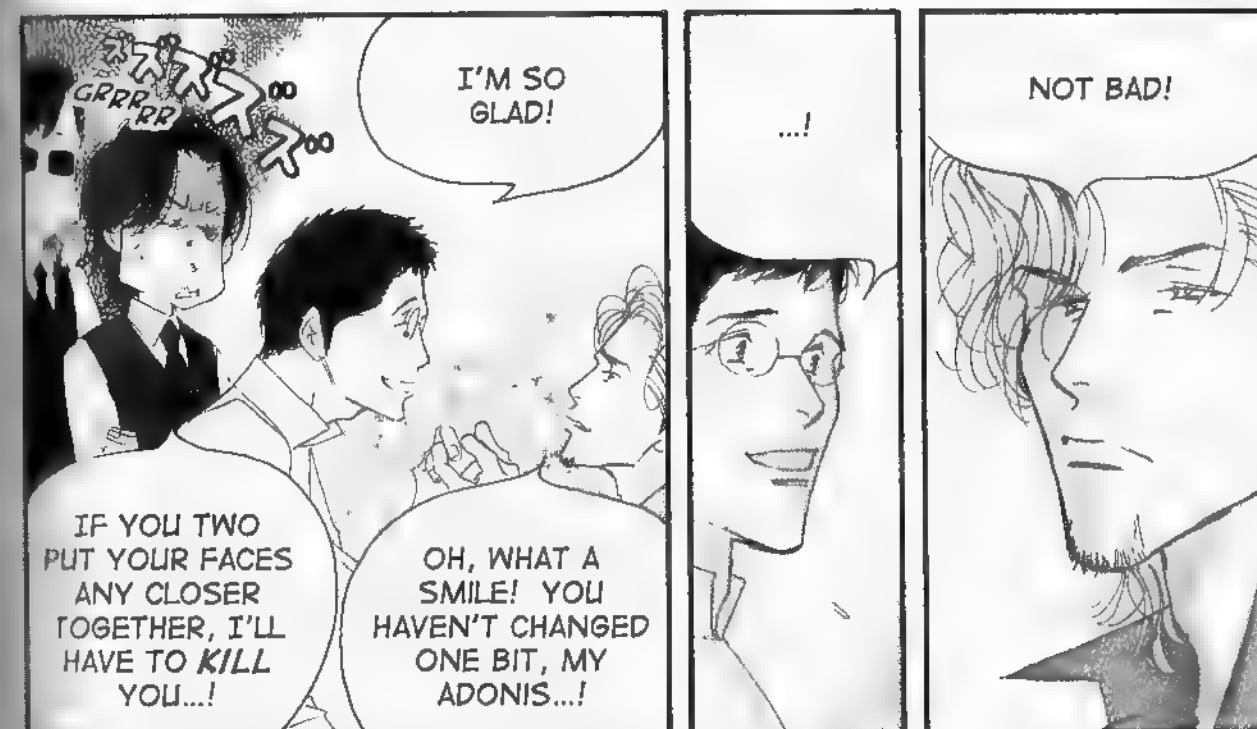
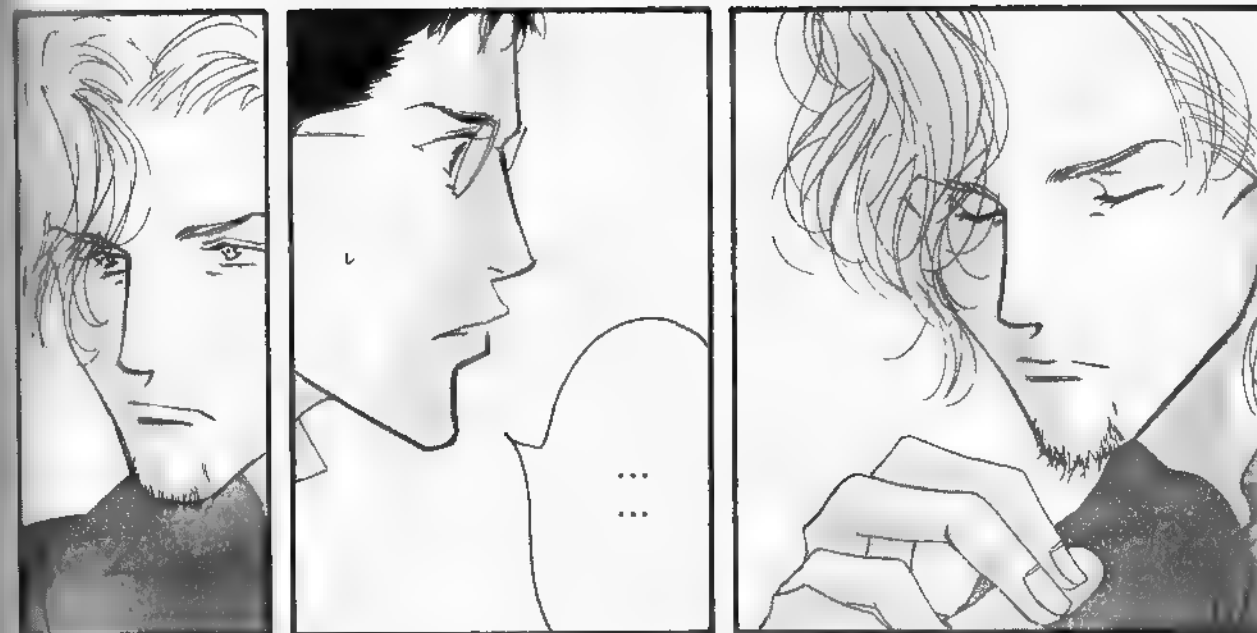
WELCOME!

<EXCUSEZ-MOI.>\*

\*NOTE: IN FRENCH









DIDN'T I TELL YOU?  
I CAME TO JAPAN TO  
DECLARE MY LOVE FOR  
YOU. INVITE ME IN.



?!  
WHAT?!



CLICK

THWAP!



RUSTLE  
RUSTLE

I...I WAS SO  
CONSPICUOUS  
WITH THESE  
ROSES...IT WAS A  
LITTLE EMBAR-  
RASSING...



LIAR.

I'M ONLY A SIDE-  
TRIP...YOU CAME  
ON BUSINESS. I  
ALREADY KNOW.



KLICK

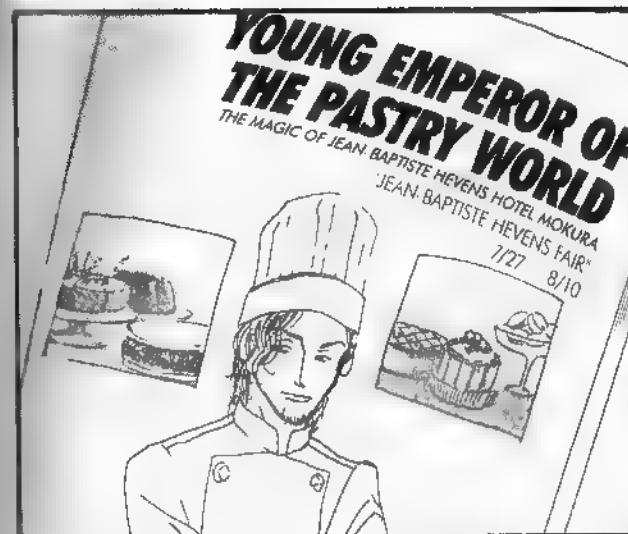


IT DOESN'T  
MATTER. HURRY  
AND GET IN  
BEFORE SOMEONE  
SEES US...

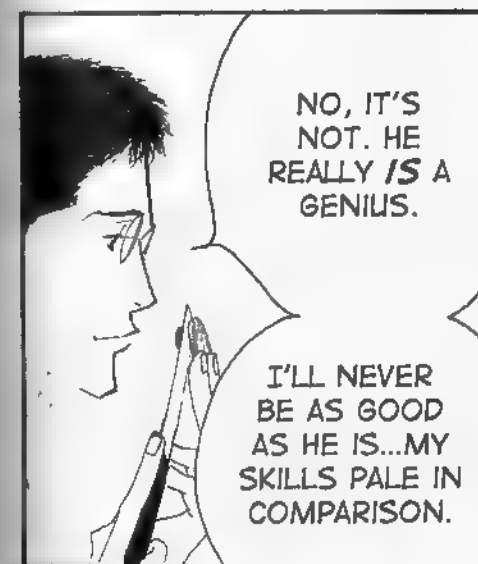


NO, I CAME TO  
SEE YOU...AND  
DO BUSINESS  
ON THE SIDE

I'M JUST  
LETTING YOU  
KNOW, THE BAKERY  
BUSINESS IS VERY  
DEMANDING.  
WHEN IT GETS  
BUSY, YOU'LL WORK  
THROUGH THE NIGHT.  
ON TOP OF THAT,  
I'M VERY SHORT-  
TEMPERED. I'M  
PRONE TO LASH OUT  
WITH MY HANDS  
FIRST, RATHER  
THAN MY  
TONGUE.



HM?



NO, IT'S  
NOT. HE  
REALLY IS A  
GENIUS.

I'LL NEVER  
BE AS GOOD  
AS HE IS...MY  
SKILLS PALE IN  
COMPARISON.



"YOUNG  
EMPEROR OF  
THE PASTRY  
WORLD"?  
WHAT AN  
EXAGGERATION!

SO! THAT GUY  
JUST SWUNG BY  
AS A SIDE-TRIP.  
HE'S ACTUALLY  
IN JAPAN ON  
BUSINESS...TO  
HOLD A DESSERT  
FAIR AT A HOTEL.

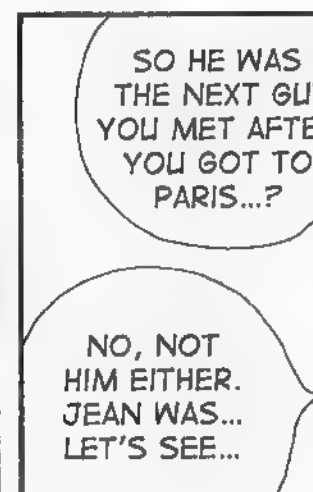
OF COURSE.  
HE MAY NOT LOOK  
IT, BUT HE'S A  
HARDCORE ARTISTE.  
HE WOULD NEVER  
LEAVE HIS STORE  
UNATTENDED  
WITHOUT GOOD  
REASON.



...

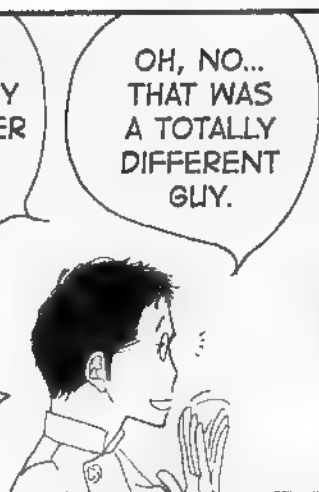
...

THIS  
MANY MEN  
LATER  
I THINK?

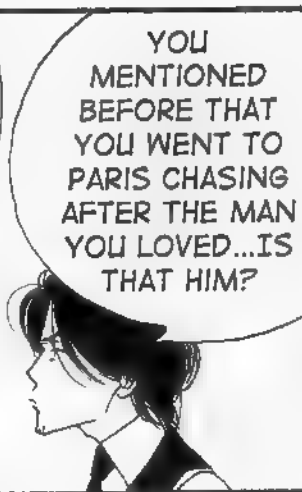


SO HE WAS  
THE NEXT GUY  
YOU MET AFTER  
YOU GOT TO  
PARIS...?

NO, NOT  
HIM EITHER.  
JEAN WAS...  
LET'S SEE...



OH, NO...  
THAT WAS  
A TOTALLY  
DIFFERENT  
GUY.



YOU  
MENTIONED  
BEFORE THAT  
YOU WENT TO  
PARIS CHASING  
AFTER THE MAN  
YOU LOVED...IS  
THAT HIM?

EVEN WHEN I'D BEEN INVITED TO A FRIEND'S PARTY, IT WAS THE SAME. HIS RESPONSE NEVER VARIED. HE WOULD SAY, "BY THE TIME YOU FINISH YOUR WORK, THE PARTY WILL HAVE JUST GOTTEN INTO FULL SWING -- YOU'LL ARRIVE WITH PERFECT TIMING!" OF COURSE, I NEVER HAD AN ANSWER TO THAT.



BY COUNTING TRAYS, I COULD CALCULATE WHEN I WOULD BE FINISHED WORKING, AND THEN I COULD TELL MY FRIENDS WHEN I WOULD BE ARRIVING

I MUST HAVE BEEN ABOUT SEVEN WHEN I FIRST STOOD IN THE KITCHEN. MY FATHER WAS A VERY STRICT MAN, YOU SEE. IF I EVER WENT OUT TO PLAY BEFORE FINISHING MY WORK AND HE FOUND OUT ABOUT IT, HE WOULD HIT ME HARD ENOUGH TO SEND ME FLYING ACROSS THE ROOM.

OUI, MONSIEUR!!



YOU WERE SUPPOSED TO LAUGH THERE!



WHY?

BECAUSE I'M GAY.



A COLLEGE GRADUATE, AND YOU CAME ALL THE WAY TO PARIS JUST SO YOU COULD BE A PEON IN SOME BAKERY? JAPAN IS AN ECONOMIC GIANT -- THERE MUST BE BETTER JOBS YOU COULD FIND THERE!

I CAME HERE AFTER I GRADUATED COLLEGE IN JAPAN.



WHAT?

22?

BUT THAT MEANS YOU'RE ONLY THREE YEARS YOUNGER THAN I AM! IT'S HARD TO TELL WITH ASIANS... I THOUGHT YOU WERE STILL IN YOUR TEENS

REALLY?



YES!

I DON'T MIND! I'LL DO ANYTHING IF YOU'LL JUST GIVE ME A POSITION!



AND THIS IS A TINY STORE. THE PAY WILL BE HORRIBLE.

TO BE HONEST, SINCE I JUST BECAME INDEPENDENT FROM MY FATHER I HAVEN'T GOT ENOUGH MONEY TO HIRE A PROPER FRENCH APPRENTICE... I THOUGHT A NON-FRENCH-SPEAKING ASIAN WOULD WORK FOR LESS PAY. STILL WANT THE JOB?

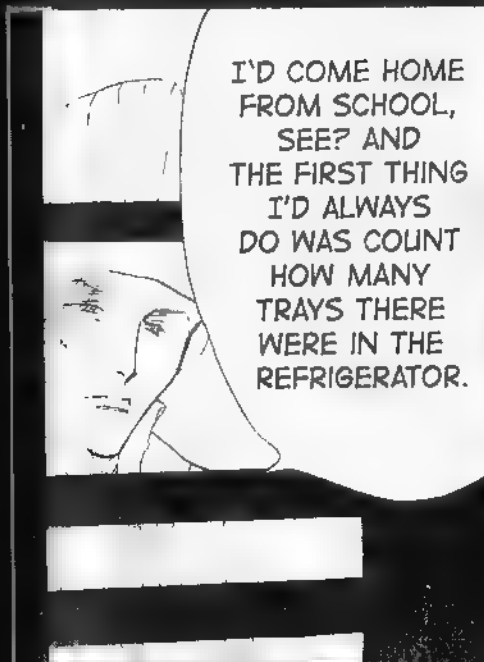
OK!



SO, YUSUKE ONO, YOU ARE HIRED. YOU WILL CONSIDER MY ORDERS ABSOLUTE, AND YOUR RESPONSE IS ALWAYS TO BE, "OUI, MONSIEUR."



I'D COME HOME FROM SCHOOL, SEE? AND THE FIRST THING I'D ALWAYS DO WAS COUNT HOW MANY TRAYS THERE WERE IN THE REFRIGERATOR.



YOUR RESPONSE?

OUI, MONSIEUR!

I CAN'T HEAR YOU!

OUI, MONSIEUR!





...I'M SORRY,  
MONSIEUR.

AFTER ALL THOSE  
TIMES I TOLD YOU NOT  
TO ACT ON YOUR OWN  
WHEN I'M NOT HERE...

MR. ERIC --  
THE CUSTOMER  
WHO ALWAYS BUYS  
OUR CROISSANTS --  
HE ASKED ME TO.  
HE SAID IF MONSIEUR  
HEVENS WASN'T  
HERE, THEN HE DIDN'T  
MIND IF I DID IT,  
SO COULD I BAKE UP  
A BATCH BEFORE  
EVENING...I'D HELPED  
MAKE THE DOUGH  
BEFORE, AND  
I KNEW HOW TO  
DO IT, SO...

WHY DID  
YOU DO IT?!



...OUI,  
MON...

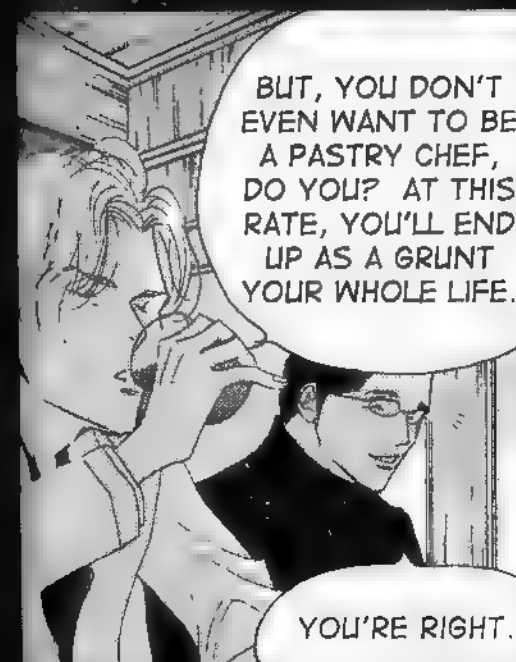


OUI,  
MONSIEUR!  
I'LL GO  
RIGHT AWAY!

DO YOU  
WANT TO BE  
HIT AGAIN?!

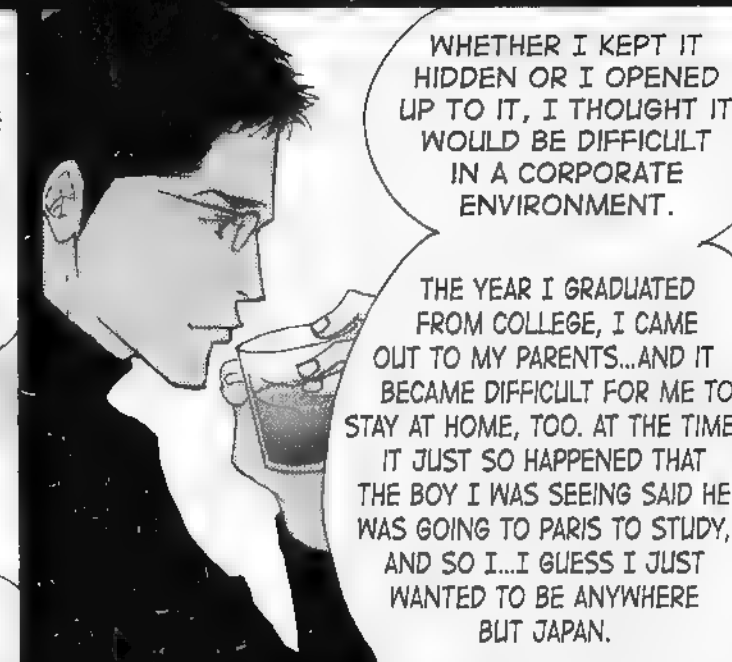
HURRY  
UP!!

**THE CROISSANT!  
THE APPLE PIE!  
THE CHOCOLATE  
ECLAIR!** THE  
QUALITY OF THESE  
THREE ITEMS  
DETERMINES THE  
QUALITY OF THE  
STORE! HOW DARE  
YOU ACT IN SUCH A  
WAY AS TO DAMAGE  
THE REPUTATION OF  
MY SHOP! NOW  
HURRY UP AND  
REMOVE ALL THE  
CROISSANTS YOU  
BAKED FROM THE  
SHELVES!!



BUT, YOU DON'T  
EVEN WANT TO BE  
A PASTRY CHEF,  
DO YOU? AT THIS  
RATE, YOU'LL END  
UP AS A GRUNT  
YOUR WHOLE LIFE.

YOU'RE RIGHT.



WHETHER I KEPT IT  
HIDDEN OR I OPENED  
UP TO IT, I THOUGHT IT  
WOULD BE DIFFICULT  
IN A CORPORATE  
ENVIRONMENT.

THE YEAR I GRADUATED  
FROM COLLEGE, I CAME  
OUT TO MY PARENTS...AND IT  
BECAME DIFFICULT FOR ME TO  
STAY AT HOME, TOO. AT THE TIME,  
IT JUST SO HAPPENED THAT  
THE BOY I WAS SEEING SAID HE  
WAS GOING TO PARIS TO STUDY,  
AND SO I...I GUESS I JUST  
WANTED TO BE ANYWHERE  
BUT JAPAN.



BUT I DON'T MIND.

AS LONG AS I'VE GOT  
MONEY ENOUGH FOR  
THAT DAY, AND A MAN  
WHO WILL SPEND ONE  
NIGHT WITH ME...THAT'S  
ALL I NEED.





...I KNEW.



YES, I'M GAY, TOO...

I'M SORRY I HIT YOU...IT WAS HALF OUT OF JEALOUSY.



HEY, JEAN-BAPTISTE.

IF I TOLD YOU...THAT ERIC WAS JUST A ONE-NIGHT STAND, AND THAT I'D BROKEN IT OFF WITH MY STUDENT BOYFRIEND LONG AGO...WHAT WOULD YOU DO?



HUH? ISN'T THAT THE CROISSANT THAT I...



SHK!



HM?



OUI, MONSIEUR!

HOW CAN YOU ANSWER SO HONESTLY? WHY...WITH THAT BALD-HEADED OLD MAN...?

HONEST

HE WAS ALWAYS SAYING HOW ADORABLE I WAS.

DO YOU SLEEP WITH ANYONE WHO CALLS YOU ADORABLE?!



YOU SLEPT WITH ERIC, DIDN'T YOU...?



OUI, M...



.....!



THEN I'LL TELL YOU! I'VE ALWAYS ADORED YOU! EVER SINCE WE FIRST MET!!



AND NOW YOU'RE TELLING ME THAT THAT BALD HEAD HAS BEEN REFLECTED IN YOUR BLACK, DOE-LIKE EYES... AND HIS FAT, CATERPILLAR-LIKE FINGERS HAVE CRAWLED OVER YOUR WHOLE FLESH?!

I CAN GET THE FRENCH

I JUST ASSUMED THAT YOU HAD A LOVER WAITING FOR YOU BACK IN JAPAN, SO I RESTRAINED MYSELF! BUT YOU...YOU...! WITH ERIC, OF ALL PEOPLE...!



...AND I STILL DON'T UNDERSTAND FRENCH-MEN...

OH...! YOUR POOR HANDS HAVE BECOME SO ROUGH...

FORGIVE ME, YUSUKE, FOR RUINING YOUR BEAUTIFUL HANDS...OH, MY YUSUKE...!



OUI, MONSIEUR!

THIS IS NO GOOD EITHER! UNTIL YOU CAN BAKE THIS IN A BEAUTIFUL GOLDEN COLOR, DON'T COME HOME TONIGHT!



EEK... I HATE THIS INTENSE SPORTS-TRAINING FEEL... THIS IS WHY I NEVER JOINED SPORTS TEAMS AT SCHOOL!

OUI, MONSIEUR!!

DON'T ANSWER ME IN THAT Sullen TONE!



WHAAAT?!

WRONG ANSWER!!

YUSUKE.

I'M GOING TO TEACH YOU A TRADE. FROM NOW ON, YOU WILL WORK UNDER ME, TRAINING IN THE ART OF PASTRY- AND BREAD-MAKING! THIS IS AN ORDER!

OH, UH...OUI, MONSIEUR.



IS THIS REALLY THE FIRST TIME YOU'VE MADE THIS?



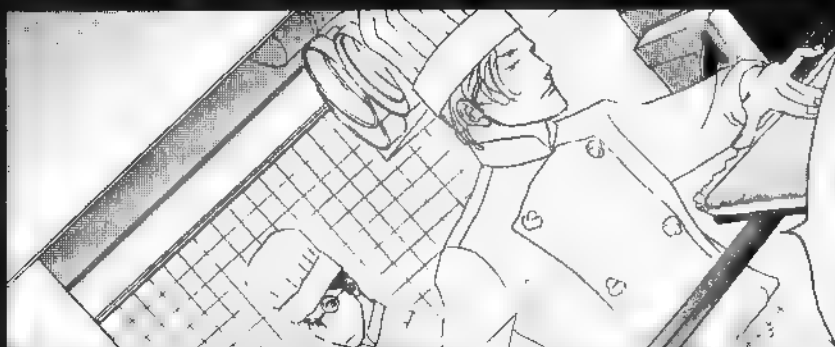
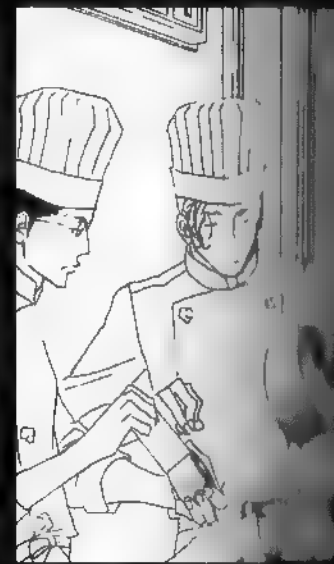
YES, BUT...?



IT GOES WITHOUT SAYING THAT THE QUALITY OF THE INGREDIENTS IS IMPORTANT.



NOT BAD!



THE CREAM AND BUTTER ARE ALL FROM ECHIRE. THE FRUITS ARE ONLY THE CREAM OF THE FROM THE RHONE VALLEY AND THE CHOCOLATE IS FROM VI AND THE FISH FOR THE TRAITS ARE FRESHLY CAUGHT ON THE COAST OF BOULOGNE-SUP AND DELIVERED OVERNIGHT.

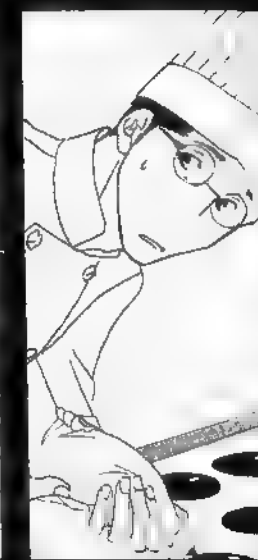


COLOR IS CRUCIAL FOR A BAKED PASTRY! IF IT'S TOO FLOURY-WHITE OR BURNT-BLACK, IT WILL NOT APPEAL TO THE CUSTOMER! TRY AGAIN!!

OUI, MONSIEUR!



NO GOOD!



IT'S TART IN FLAVOR, BUT YOU ARE SURE TO ENJOY THE CONTRAST OF THE SMOOTH CHIBOLUST, WHICH MELTS IN YOUR MOUTH AS DELICATELY AS VIRGIN SNOW, AND THE CRUNCHY TEXTURE OF THE BASE. IT IS A CAKE AS REFRESHING AS YOUR BEAUTY, MADAM.



TODAY I RECOMMEND THE LIME CHIBOLUST!

THE CHIBOLUST IS A HOUSE SPECIALTY OF OURS, BUT WE'VE MADE THIS ONE WITH CITRUS FRUIT. THE BOTTOM LAYER CONSISTS OF PINE NUTS AND WALNUTS MIXED WITH CHOCOLATE

OH NO, ALL I DID WAS COME UP WITH THE IDEA.



MONSIEUR HEVENS CERTAINLY HAS BECOME THE PRINCE OF THE INDUSTRY! HE'S HANDSOME TOO, SO I GUESS IT WAS INEVITABLE. BUT REALLY, MR. ONO, THAT LIME CHIBOLUST WAS YOUR...



HE'S SO GOOD TO THE CUSTOMERS! THEY'D NEVER SUSPECT THAT HE ONLY EVER YELLS OR HITS AT US!



OH!



DEE-LICIOUS!!



DELICIOUS!!



DELICIOUS!!



ARE YOU FINDING FAULT WITH HOW I RUN MY BUSINESS?!



OH GOOD! THEN I'LL BE WAITING AT MY APARTMENT AFTER WORK!



I'M FINE WITH THE WAY THINGS ARE.

BY THE WAY, JEAN-BAPTISTE SAID HE'S GOT TO GO TO A FRIEND'S PARTY AND HE WON'T BE HOME TONIGHT



ARE ALL JAPANESE PEOPLE SO SELFLESS?

IF I HAD YOUR TALENT I'D HAVE BRANCHED OUT ON MY OWN LONG AGO

IT'S ASTONISHING! YOUR PASTRIES ARE ALWAYS IMPROVING. I HEAR YOU'LL BE MOVING YOUR STORE TO RUE SAINT-HONOR SOON -- CONGRATULATIONS!

CAN YOU TELL ME WHAT YOUR RECOMMENDED CAKE FOR THE DAY IS?



THANK YOU VERY MUCH!

THE CAKE I HAD THE OTHER DAY WAS FABULOUS! THANKS TO YOU, IT WAS A WONDERFUL PARTY. YOUR PASTRIES ARE CERTAINLY THE BEST!

HMM...THEN WHAT ABOUT FLAVORING THE CREAM WITH APPLE BRANDY? THAT WILL INCREASE BOTH THE AROMA AND FLAVOR, AND GIVE THE CAKE MORE PUNCH.



OUR APPLE CHIBOLUST NEEDS A SIGNATURE ACCENT THAT REPRESENTS OUR STORE...

THE APPLES ARE VERY GOOD... THEY'VE RETAINED THEIR CRISP TEXTURE, AND ARE BOTH TART AND SWEET.



THIS IS...!





OR WHAT?! DID YOU  
SEDUCE ALAN VERGNE  
WITH YOUR BODY, TOO --  
JUST LIKE YOU SLEPT  
WITH THAT SNOTTY LITTLE  
BRUNETTE APPRENTICE?



...NOW  
PROMISE ME.  
I'LL STILL  
FORGIVE YOU  
IF YOU SAY  
YOU'LL NEVER  
SLEEP WITH  
OTHER MEN  
AGAIN!



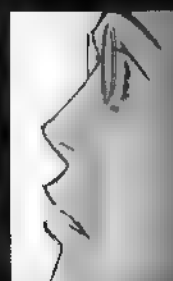
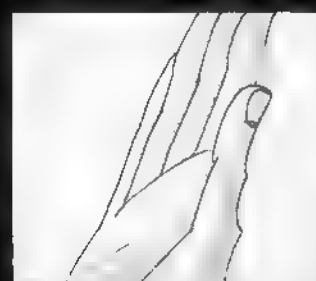
YOU  
WHORE!!



...KNOWING  
THAT'S A  
PROMISE I  
CAN'T KEEP?  
JEAN-  
BAPTISTE...



.....G!!



BUT... YOU'RE AN ARTIST  
AT-HEART, AREN'T  
YOU? I JUST THOUGHT  
IT WOULD BE EASIER  
FOR YOU IF YOU LEFT  
THE HANDLING OF PR  
AND MANAGEMENT TO  
A SPECIALIST IN  
THOSE FIELDS.

OH, I GET IT -- THIS  
"SPECIALIST" IS YOUR  
NEW LOVER, RIGHT?  
WHEN DID YOU LEARN  
HOW TO TALK SO BIG  
TO ME, EH?!



I NEVER  
SAID THAT.

IT'S ONLY  
NATURAL TO THINK  
OF EXPANDING THE  
STORE, AND IT'S  
TRUE THAT THE  
BUSINESS  
OPERATIONS OF A  
BAKERY MUST BE  
UNIFIED IF IT IS  
TO LAST.

BUT... THAT  
OFFER...  
I WAS GOING  
TO TURN IT  
DOWN...

IT'S A GOOD OFFER!  
A CAREER OF JUST  
THREE YEARS AS A  
PÂTISSIER, AND  
ALREADY YOU'VE BEEN  
HEADHUNTED BY A  
PARISIAN THREE-STAR  
RESTAURANT! IT'S  
UNHEARD-OF!

WHY? YOU SHOULD  
GO! I KNOW WHAT  
EVERYONE IS SAYING---  
THAT IT WOULD HAVE  
TAKEN JEAN-BAPTISTE  
HEVENS ANOTHER FIVE  
YEARS TO ESTABLISH A  
STORE IN A PREMIER  
LOCATION IN PARIS IF  
IT WASN'T FOR THAT  
JAPANESE PÂTISSIER!



...I HEAR THAT  
ALAN VERGNE  
WANTS TO  
WELCOME YOU  
AS A PÂTISSIER  
AT HIS SHOP.

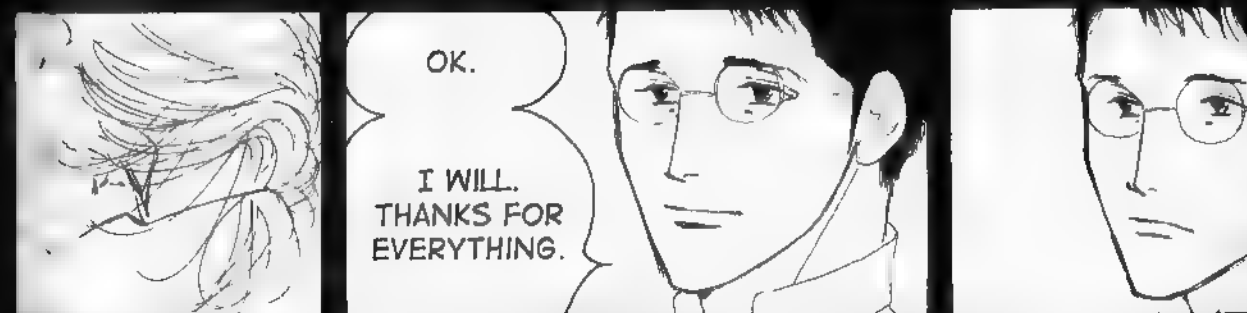


THUNK



IT'S ALWAYS LIKE THIS...! I HIT YOU, REGRET IT, AND END UP CRAWLING BACK TO YOU ON MY KNEES IN APOLOGY...I'VE HAD ENOUGH!

GET OUT...!!



OK.

I WILL.  
THANKS FOR  
EVERYTHING.



I WAS JUST A  
BUSINESSMAN  
AFTER ALL.



GOOD-  
BYE.



BUT JEAN-  
BAPTISTE...

YOU'RE THE ONE  
THAT BUILT THE STORE UP  
TO WHERE IT IS...NOT ME.  
HAVEN'T YOU ALWAYS SAID?  
SOMEONE WHO CAN ONLY  
THINK OF PASTRY-MAKING AS  
A BUSINESS SHOULD NEVER  
BECOME AN ARTISAN...IF THE  
DESIRE TO MAKE THE  
CUSTOMER HAPPY IS NOT IN  
HIS HEART, HE CAN NEVER  
MAKE GOOD PASTRIES...

**I LOVE YOU...!!**

HMM...IT WAS LIKE  
ONE OF THOSE  
FRENCH FILMS --  
TWO PEOPLE MEET  
AND HAVE SEX  
FIFTEEN MINUTES  
INTO THE MOVIE, AND  
THEN SPEND THE  
NEXT HOUR AND  
FORTY-FIVE MINUTES  
JUST FIGHTING AND  
ARGUING...

HIS  
STUBBLE  
HURTS...

I STILL  
REGRET  
THAT TIME.  
I WAS STILL  
IMMATURE BACK  
THEN...OH, TO  
BE ABLE TO  
HOLD YOU IN  
MY ARMS AGAIN  
LIKE THIS! YOU  
FORGIVE ME --  
DON'T YOU,  
YUSUKE...?

I LOVE YOU...



*Fin.*

TRANSLATION BY: YUSUKE ONO

**WAIT!**

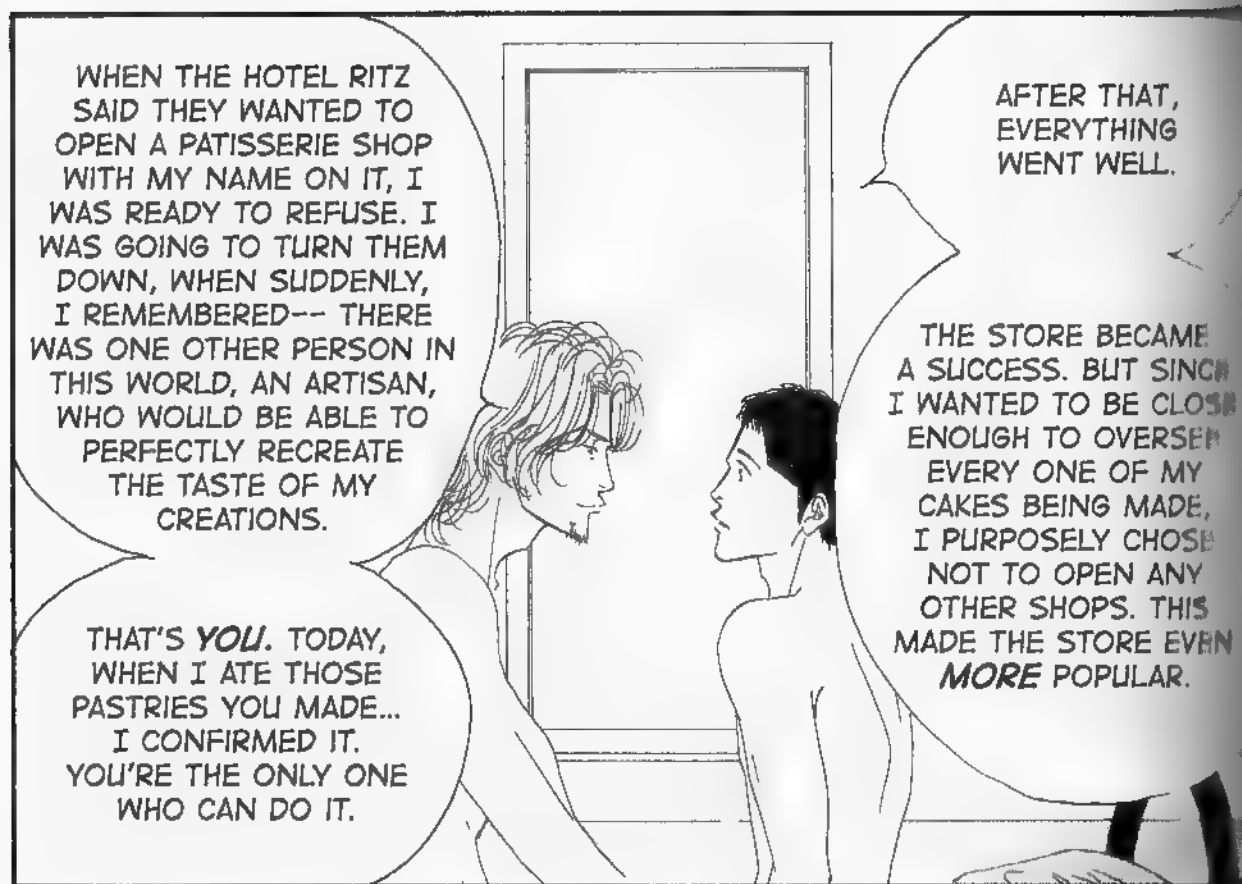
**YUSUKE!!**

WAIT,  
YUSUKE! I  
WAS WRONG!  
I WENT TOO  
FAR!!

**YUSUKE!**

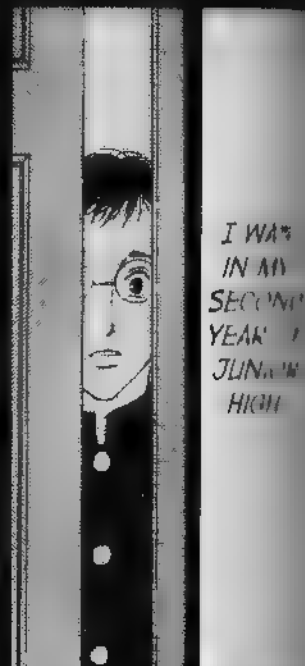
DON'T  
GO,  
YUSUKE!

**YUSUKE!!**





THE TWO  
PEOPLE  
IN MY  
PARENTS'  
BEDROOM  
WERE MY  
MOTHER  
AND THE  
TEACHER  
IN CHARGE  
OF  
MY CLASS.



I WAS  
IN MY  
SECOND  
YEAR OF  
JUNIOR  
HIGH

MY MOTHER  
HAD ALWAYS  
BEEN RATHER  
CARELESS...  
SHE MUST  
HAVE  
FORGOTTEN  
THAT I  
WOULD BE  
HOME EARLY  
FROM THE  
TUTORING  
SCHOOL  
THAT DAY.

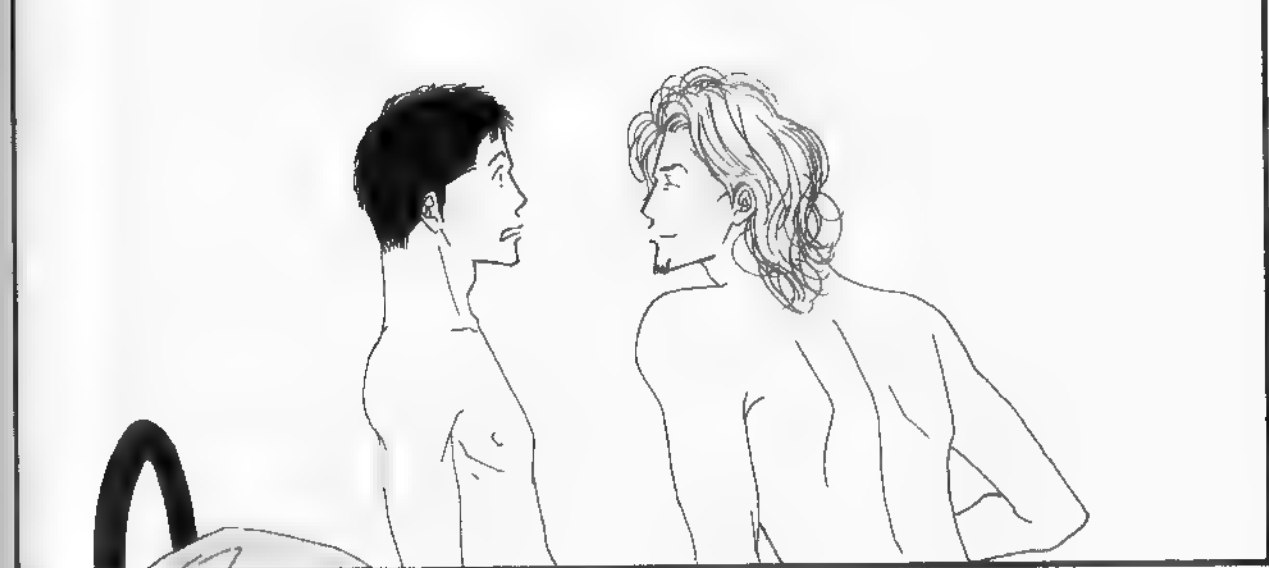


"IF YUSUKE  
FINDS OUT,  
THEN HE  
FINDS OUT  
I'LL SHOW  
YOU HOW  
GOOD A  
WOMAN  
CAN BE,  
TEACHER..."

SO AS NOT TO  
WAKE MY SLEEPING  
SISTERS, I  
PLUNGED MY HEAD  
INTO THE PILLOW  
AND CRIED. I HATED  
MY MOTHER.



...BECAUSE I PROMISE TO  
PAY YOU THREE TIMES  
THE MONEY YOU'RE  
MAKING NOW...WITH NO  
STRINGS ATTACHED!



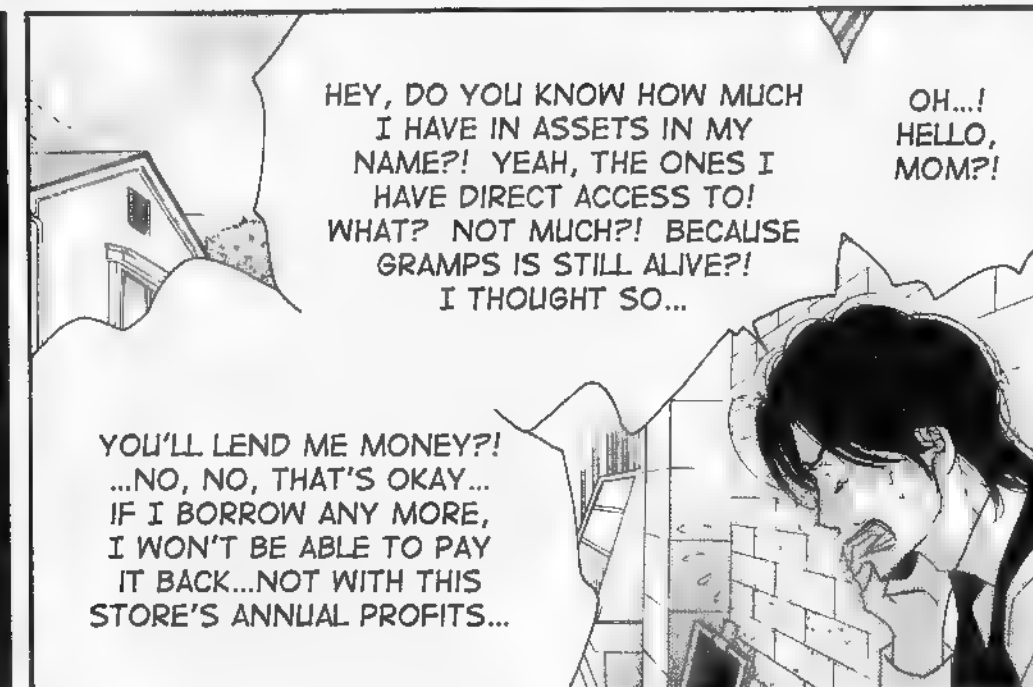
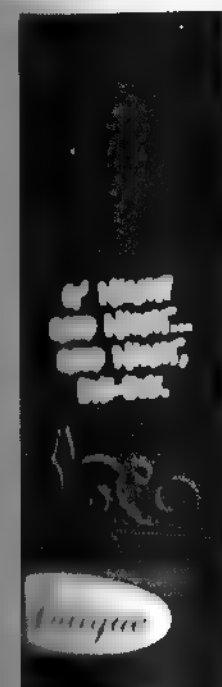
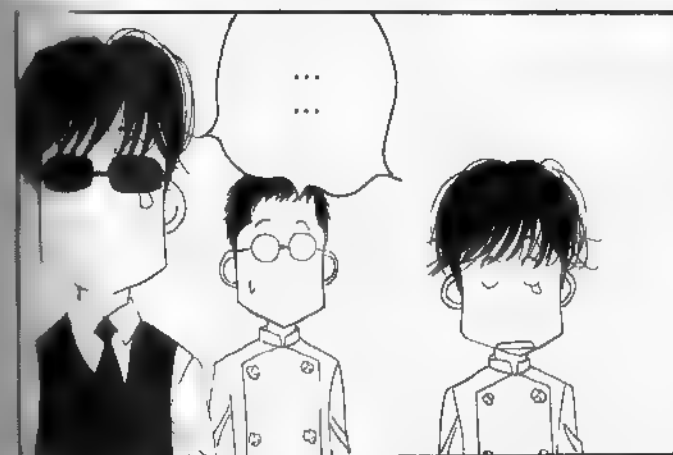
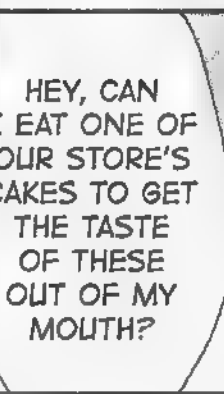
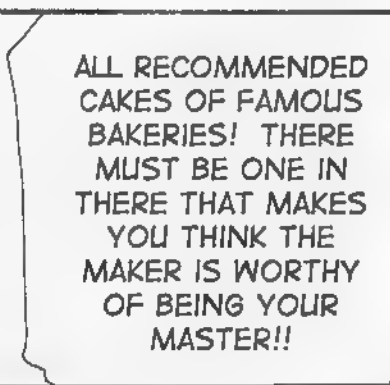
FORGIVE ME...BUT WHEN I HEARD  
THAT, A SINGLE THOUGHT  
FLASHED THROUGH MY HEAD:  
**WITH THAT SALARY, I COULD  
ALSO BUY A PAIR OF PRADA  
SANDALS TO GO WITH THE  
PANTS!**



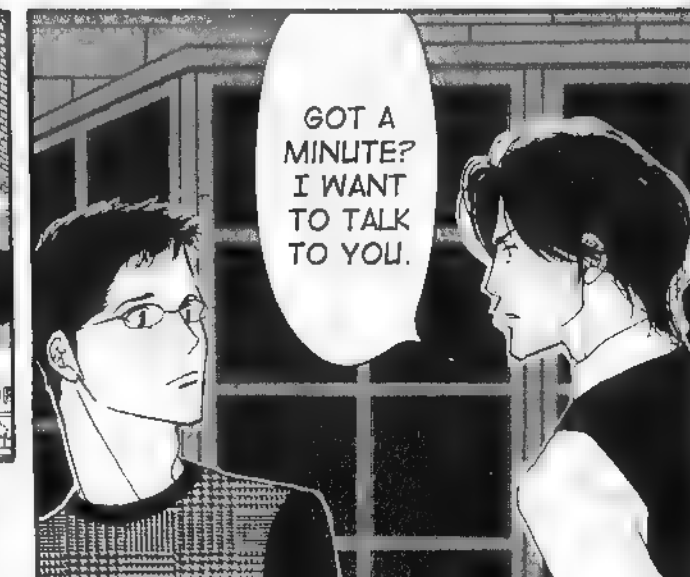
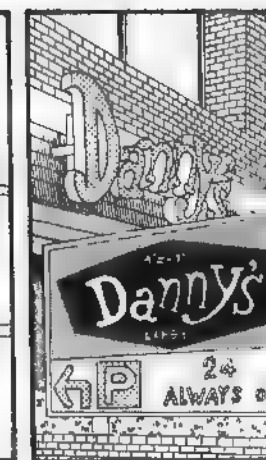
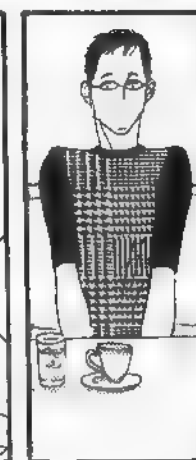
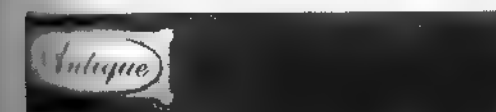
## Recipe 12 (part 2)

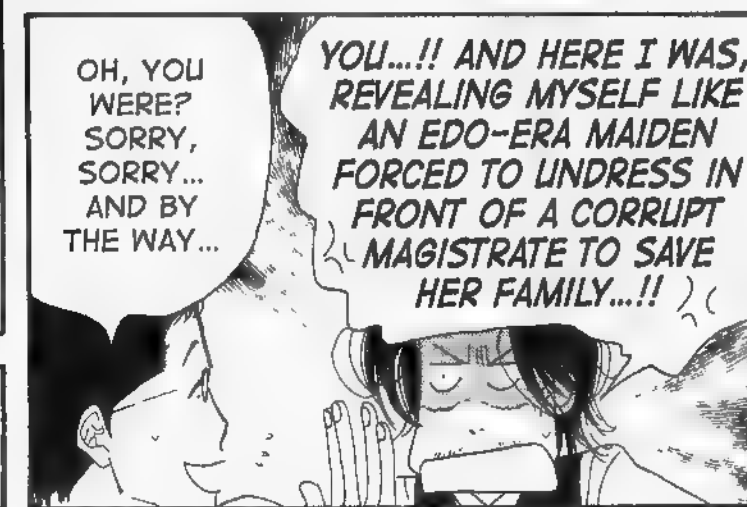
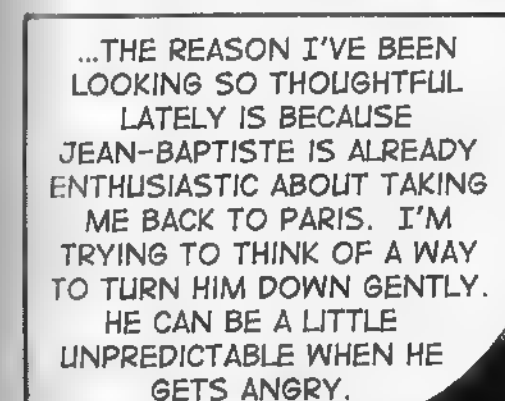
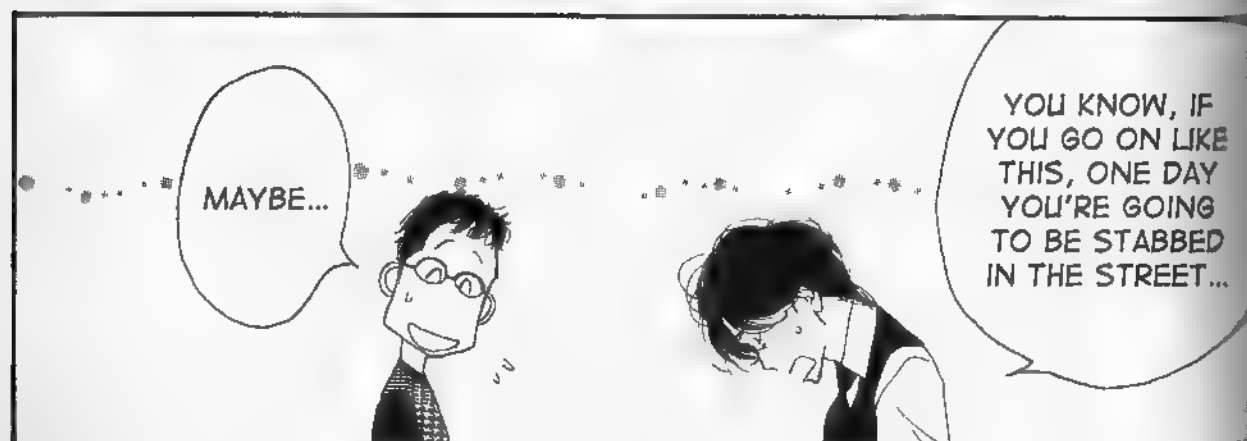
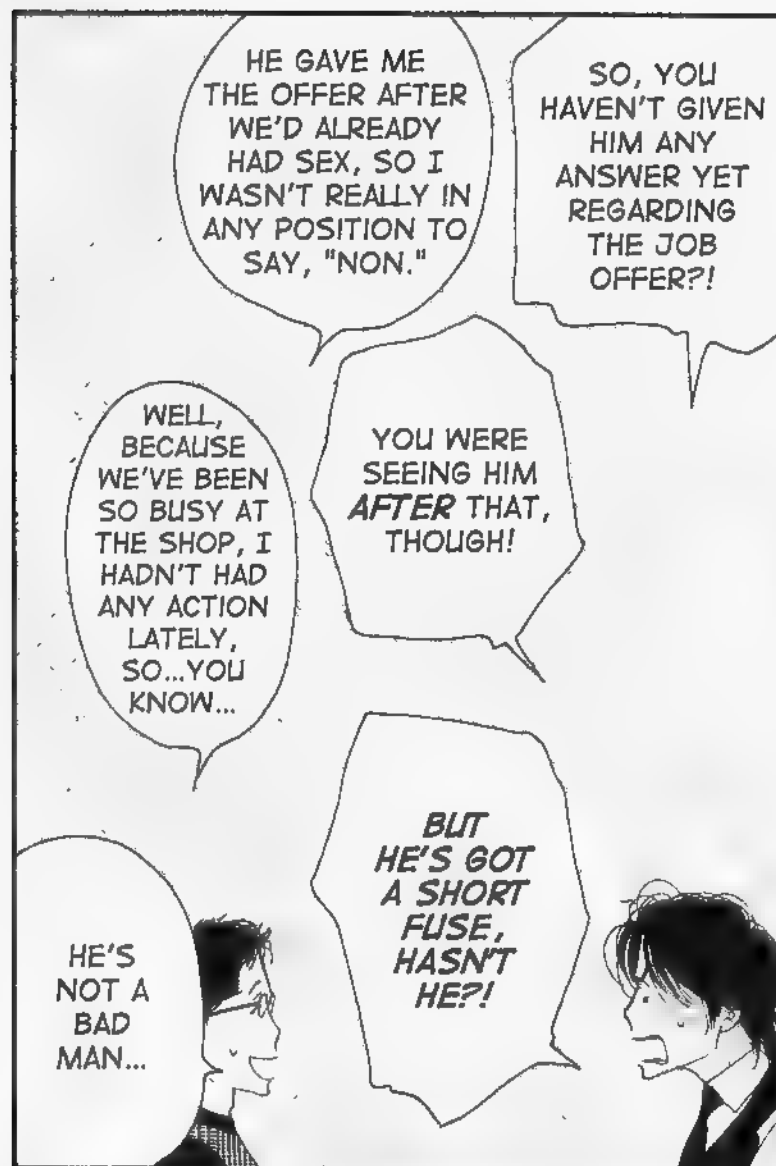














...I GUESS NOT...

SOME-  
THING  
YOU HAVE  
CONTROL  
OVER...

YES,  
SIR.  
RIGHT  
AWAY...

OH, I'M  
SORRY, MY  
COFFEE'S  
GOTTEN  
COLD --  
COULD I  
GET A FRESH  
CUP?

BUT IT'S  
NOT REALLY  
SOMETHING  
YOU HAVE  
ANY  
CONTROL  
OVER, YOU  
KNOW?



BED HAIR.



CHIRP  
CHIRP  
CHIRP



HUH?  
NO, I  
HAVEN'T  
HEARD  
ANY-  
THING  
FROM  
ONO.  
EIJII?

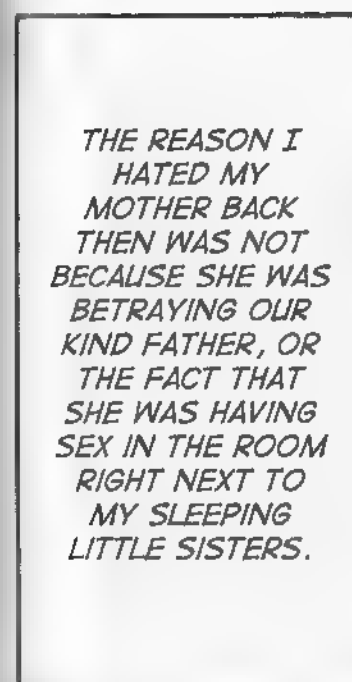


ACTUALLY,  
WHEN I HEARD  
HIM SAY IT,  
I WANTED TO  
BANZAI, TOO.

HURRAY! SO  
MR. ONO IS  
GOING TO STAY  
AT OUR STORE  
FOREVER!!

BANZAI!  
BANZAI!

RRRRR



THE REASON I  
HATED MY  
MOTHER BACK  
THEN WAS NOT  
BECAUSE SHE WAS  
BETRAYING OUR  
KIND FATHER, OR  
THE FACT THAT  
SHE WAS HAVING  
SEX IN THE ROOM  
RIGHT NEXT TO  
MY SLEEPING  
LITTLE SISTERS.



I THOUGHT YOU  
WERE A LITTLE  
MORE ADEPT AT  
HANDLING LIFE,  
BUT YOU'RE  
ACTUALLY PRETTY  
RECKLESS.



I WAS  
JEALOUS.



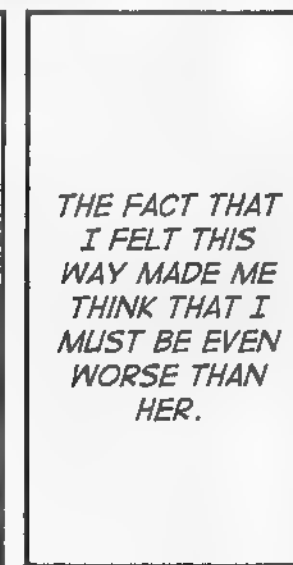
I HATED HER  
BECAUSE  
SHE WAS  
SLEEPING  
WITH THE  
FIRST MAN  
I'D EVER  
FALLEN IN  
LOVE WITH.



WOULD  
ANYONE  
LIKE A  
REFILL?



I'VE NEVER  
REALLY  
CARED ABOUT  
BEING GOOD  
TO MYSELF,  
SO...



THE FACT THAT  
I FELT THIS  
WAY MADE ME  
THINK THAT I  
MUST BE EVEN  
WORSE THAN  
HER.



I'M GOING WITH YOU!



I SAID...!



...

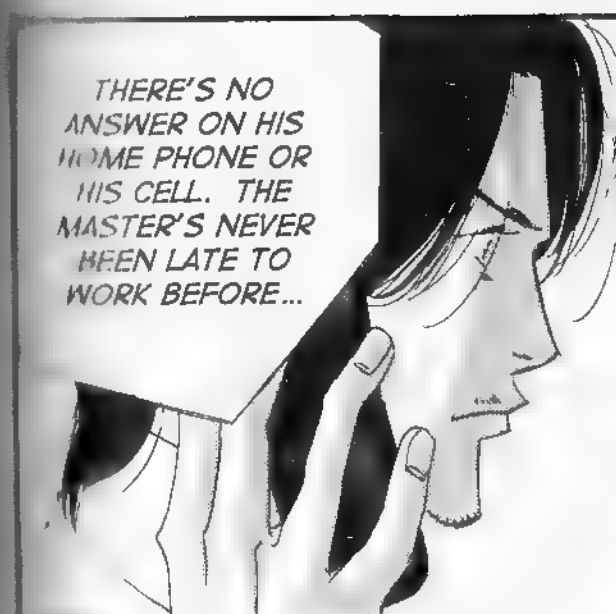


TATIEPT



PAN-T

OUCH



THERE'S NO ANSWER ON HIS HOME PHONE OR HIS CELL. THE MASTER'S NEVER BEEN LATE TO WORK BEFORE...

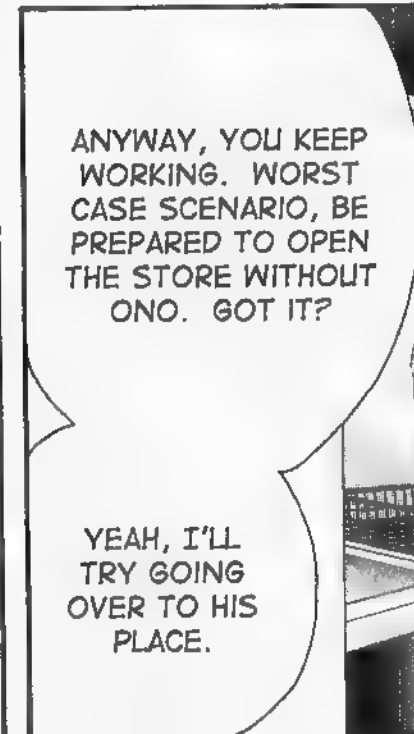


BUT HE SHOULD HAVE BEEN HERE AT THE STORE BY NOW.



I'LL CALL YOU BACK LATER. BYE.

MY LORD?!



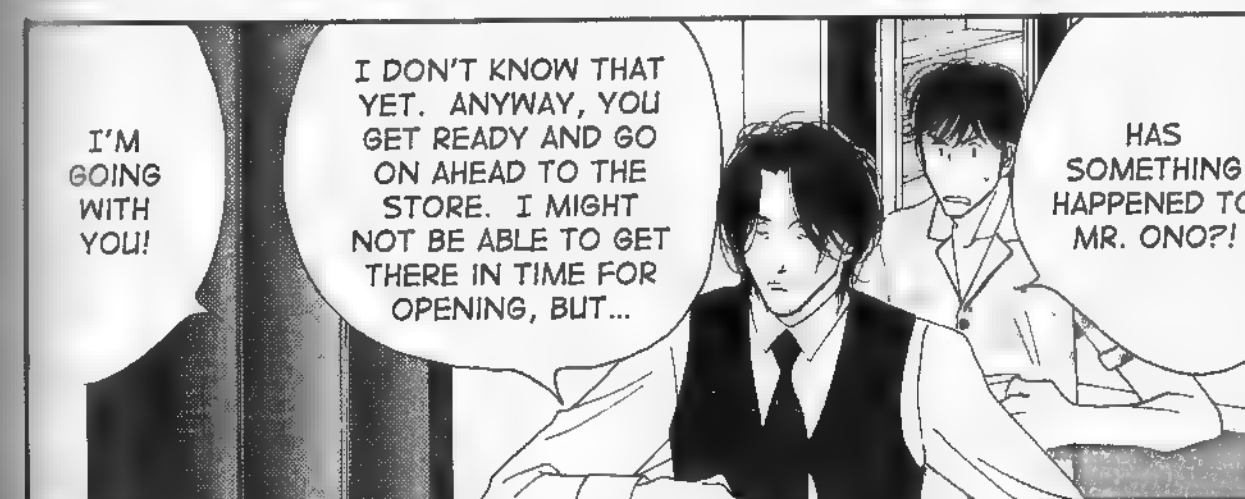
ANYWAY, YOU KEEP WORKING. WORST CASE SCENARIO, BE PREPARED TO OPEN THE STORE WITHOUT ONO. GOT IT?

YEAH, I'LL TRY GOING OVER TO HIS PLACE.



OK.

I GOT IT.



I'M GOING WITH YOU!

I DON'T KNOW THAT YET. ANYWAY, YOU GET READY AND GO ON AHEAD TO THE STORE. I MIGHT NOT BE ABLE TO GET THERE IN TIME FOR OPENING, BUT...

HAS SOMETHING HAPPENED TO MR. ONO?!



GRAB!



OW...!



LATE?!



HEY, ARE YOU OKAY FOR YOUR GIG AT THE HOTEL?! I'M LATE! I HAVE TO GO.

YUSUKE!



SO, YOU WON'T RECONSIDER...



OH...A NOSE-BLEED...

I'M SORRY...

HUH?



IF YOU HAVE NO NEED FOR THEM, WHY NOT GIVE YOURSELF TO ME. YOUR TALENTS ARE THE VERY THINGS I HAVE BEEN AFTER ALL MY LIFE!!

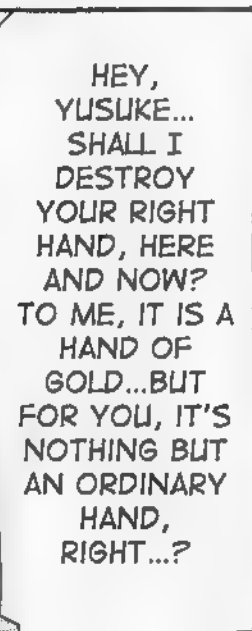
WHAT?! LATE?! WHAT REASON DO YOU HAVE TO BE SO DEDICATED? OR TO FOLLOW MY TEACHINGS EXACTLY TO MAKE THE BEST PASTRIES? OR TO RELY ON YOUR EXCEPTIONAL TALENT AND CONJURE UP A DELICIOUS TASTE NO ONE HAS EXPERIENCED BEFORE?



WHAT?

Y-YOU'RE JOKING...

WAIT...



HEY, YUSUKE... SHALL I DESTROY YOUR RIGHT HAND, HERE AND NOW? TO ME, IT IS A HAND OF GOLD...BUT FOR YOU, IT'S NOTHING BUT AN ORDINARY HAND, RIGHT...?

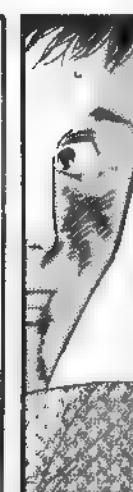
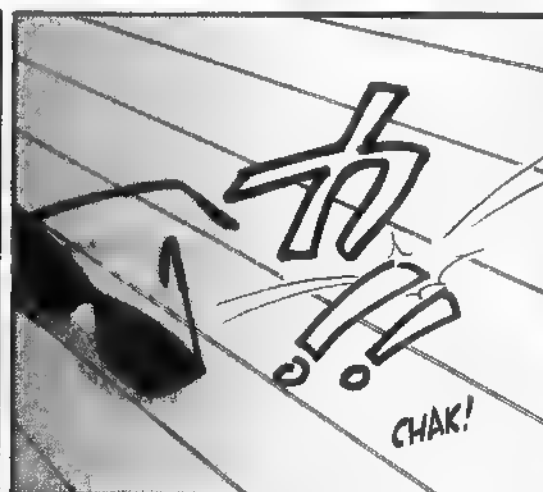
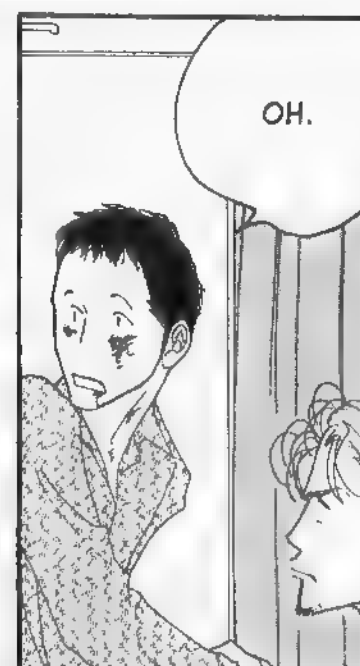
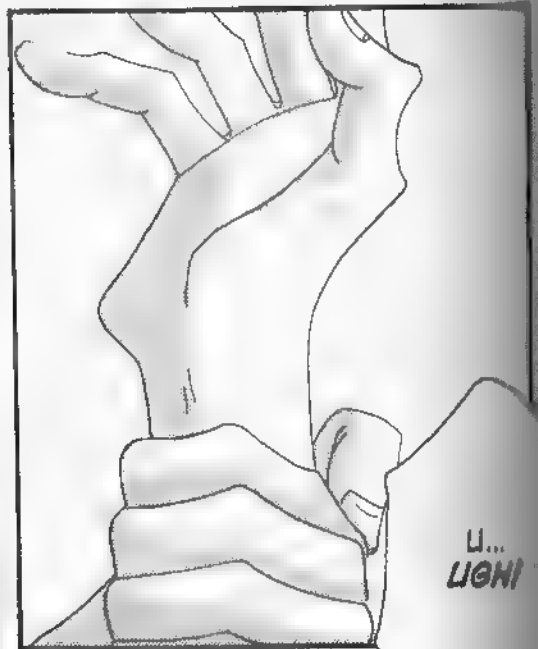


I'M LATE...!



AAAH!!

WHY?! IT'S THREE TIMES YOUR CURRENT SALARY! IS JAPAN SO KIND TO GAYS?!



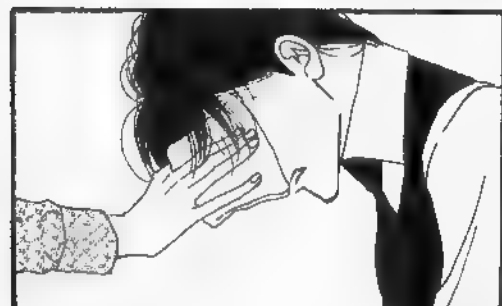




DRIBBLE  
DRIBBLE



PLEASE  
DON'T SAY  
SUCH SAD  
THINGS...

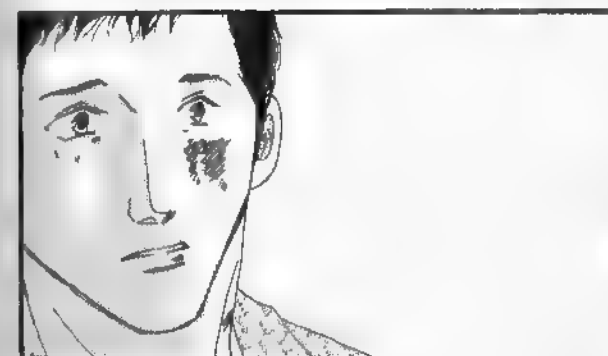


COME  
TO  
THINK  
OF IT...



SIGH...  
IT'S THE  
NATURE OF  
BEING A MAN...  
MY BODY IS  
BATTERED AND  
BRUISED, BUT  
SEEING HIM MAKE  
SUCH A FACE  
STILL AROUSES  
ME...

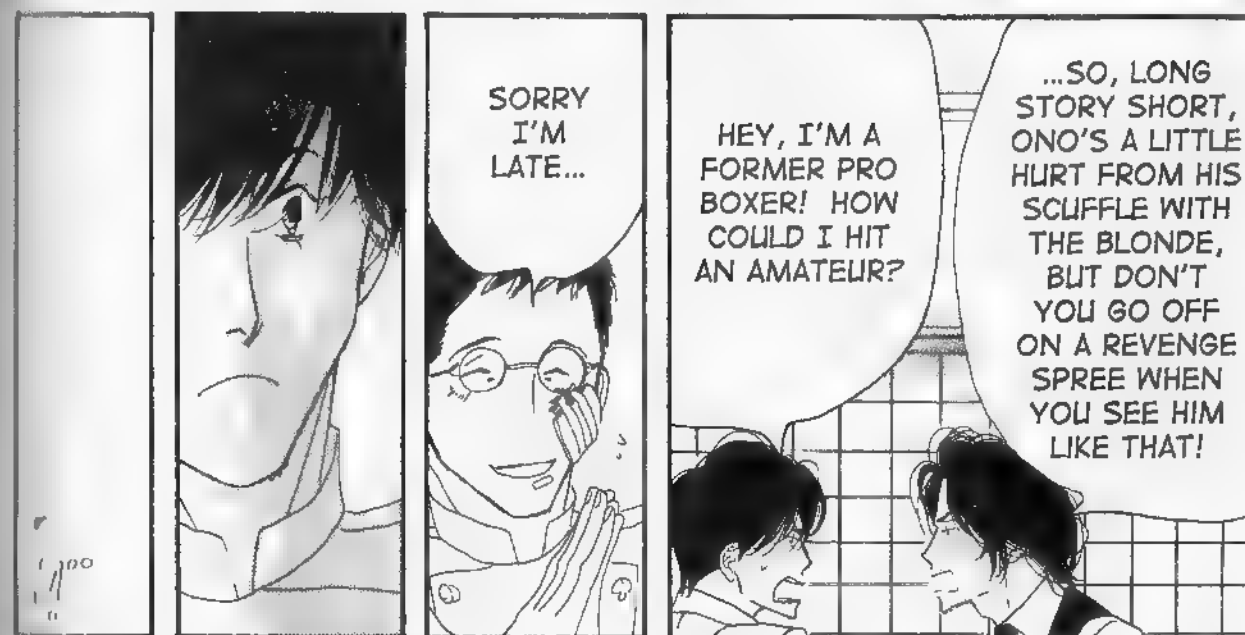
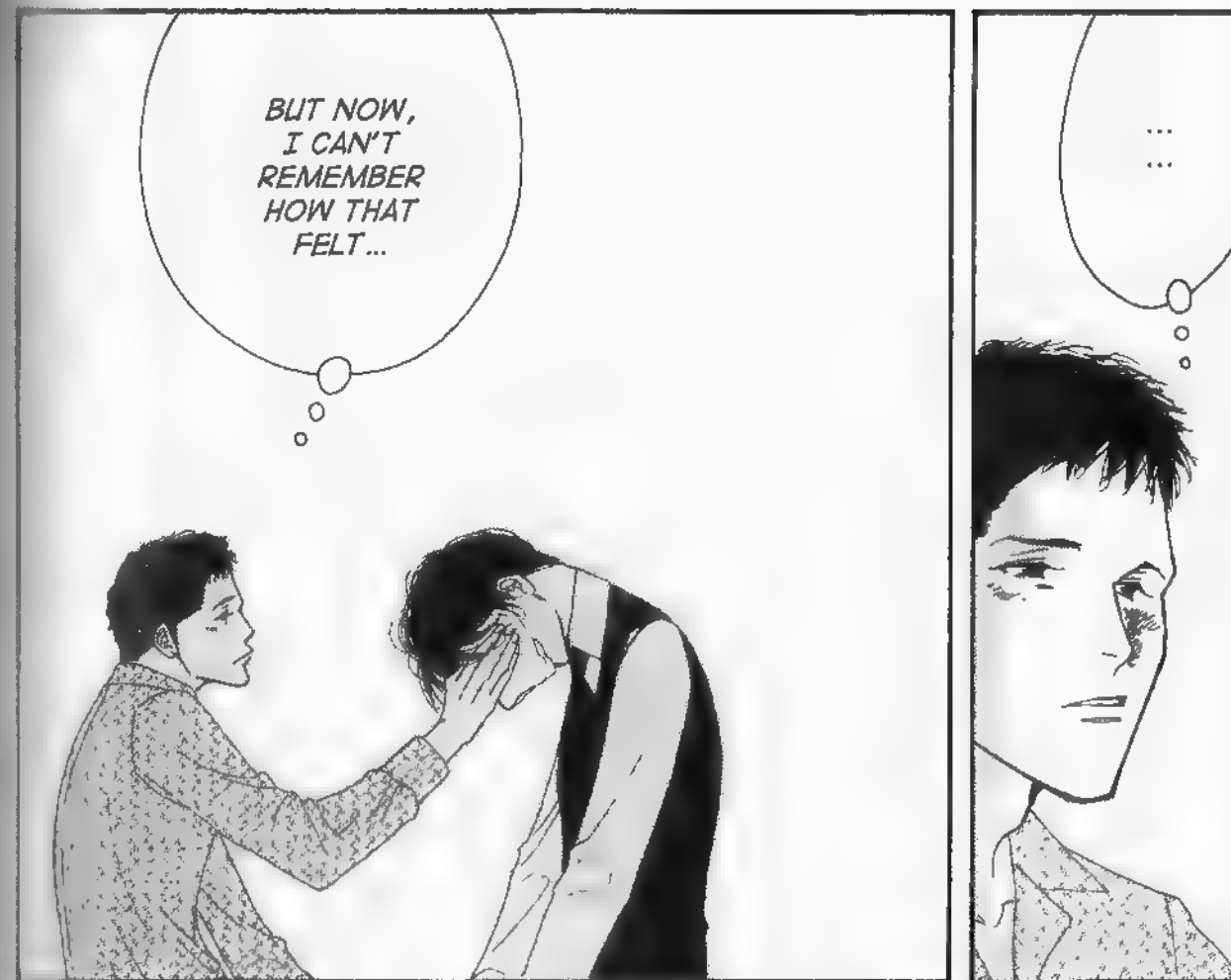
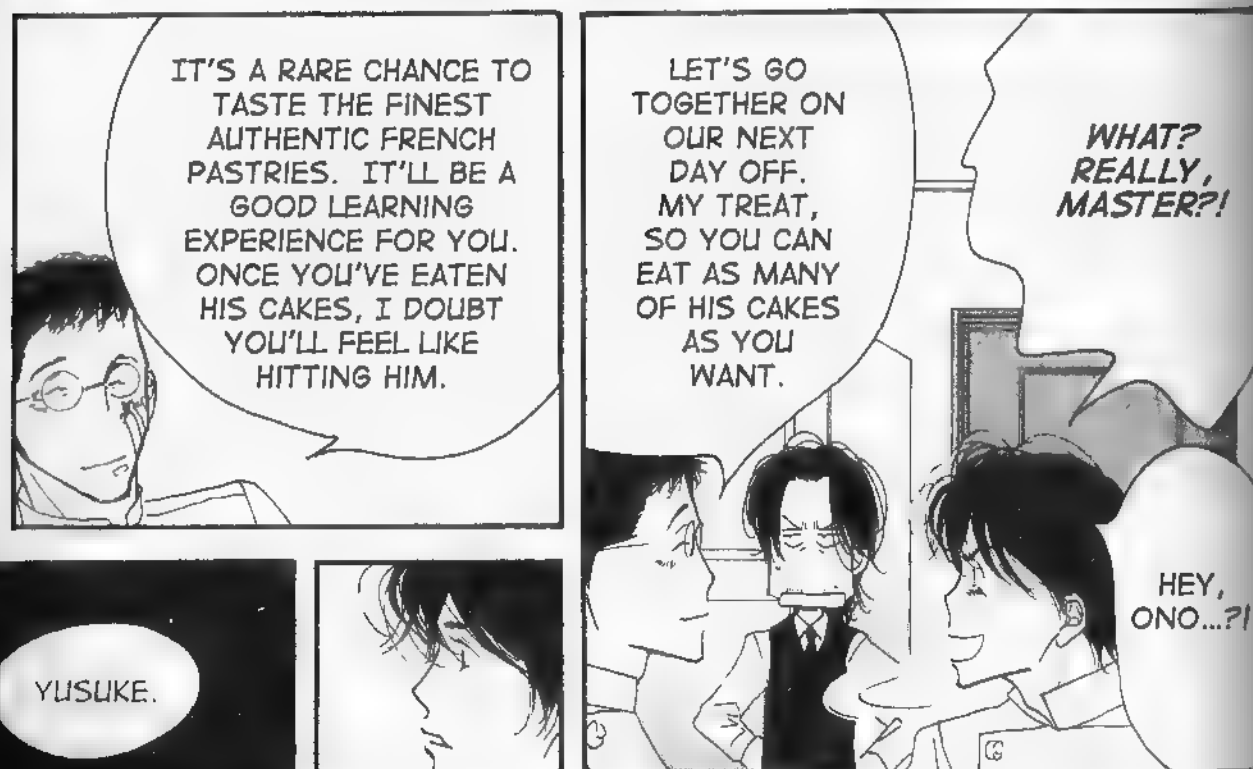
I USED TO CRY A LOT IN THE PAST,  
TOO. THAT TIME TACHIBANA  
DUMPED ME, I CRIED MY EYES OUT  
ON THE TRAIN HOME AND WEIRDED  
OUT THE OTHER PASSENGERS. ME,  
A GROWN MALE STUDENT, BAWLING  
IN PUBLIC. I REALLY LOVED  
TACHIBANA BACK THEN...AND THAT  
TEACHER FROM MY CLASS, TOO...



DRIBBLE



PITTER  
PATTER  
PITTER





FLINCH



TAKE CARE...



OF COURSE. BUT IT'S QUITE HARD, YOU KNOW. OUT OF EVERY TEN THAT YOU THINK

REALLY? ON MY OWN... FROM SCRATCH?



HUH?

HMM...I WAS NEVER ABLE TO PREDICT HIS REACTIONS, RIGHT UP UNTIL THE VERY END.

OH, THAT'S RIGHT. WE'LL HAVE TO START THINKING UP SOME NEW CAKES FOR THE AUTUMN SEASON, SO YOU COME UP WITH A COUPLE OF TRIAL ITEMS, TOO. OKAY, KANDA?



I'LL DO MY BEST!



I'VE ALWAYS BEEN...

..JEALOUS OF YOUR TALENT.



I'M SORRY...



BUT NOW...

AND UNTIL I'VE GIVEN HIM ALL THE KNOWLEDGE I POSSESS ABOUT THE ART OF PASTRY-MAKING, I CAN'T LEAVE THIS STORE...

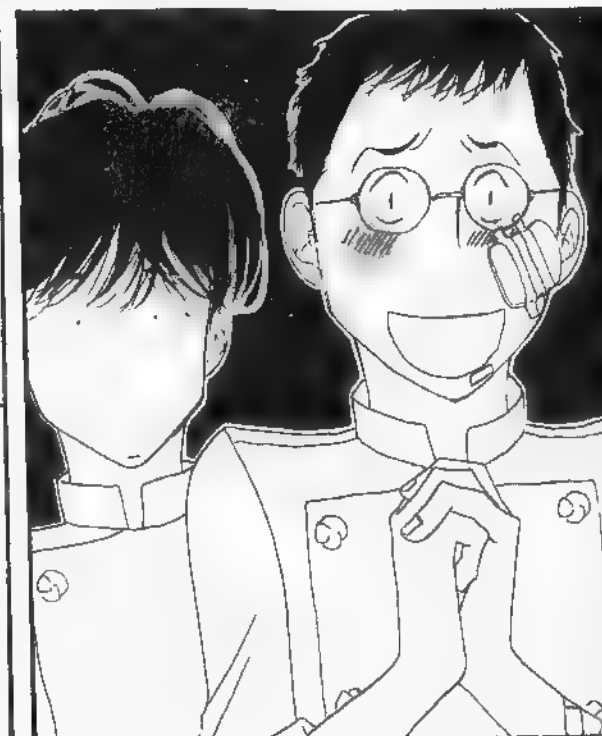
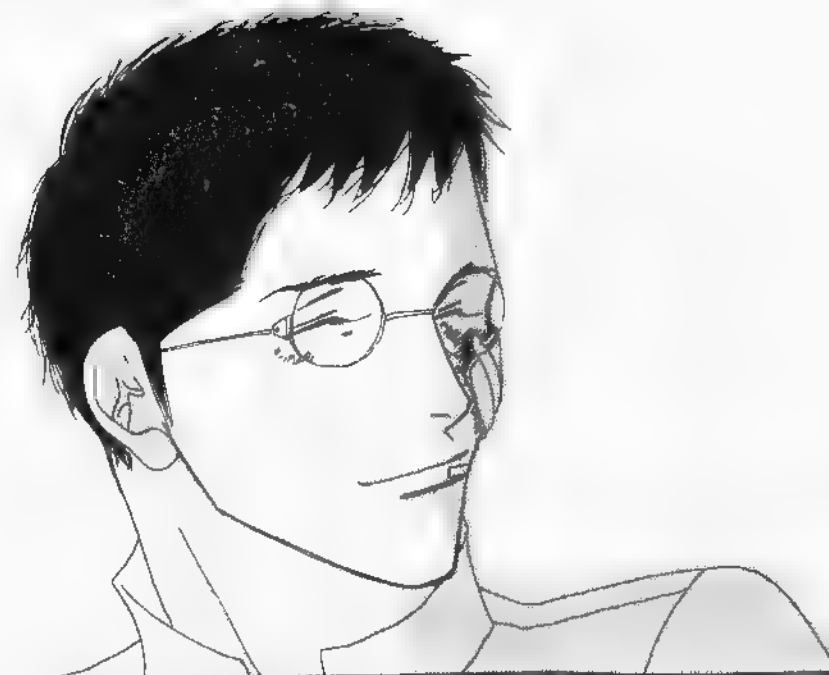
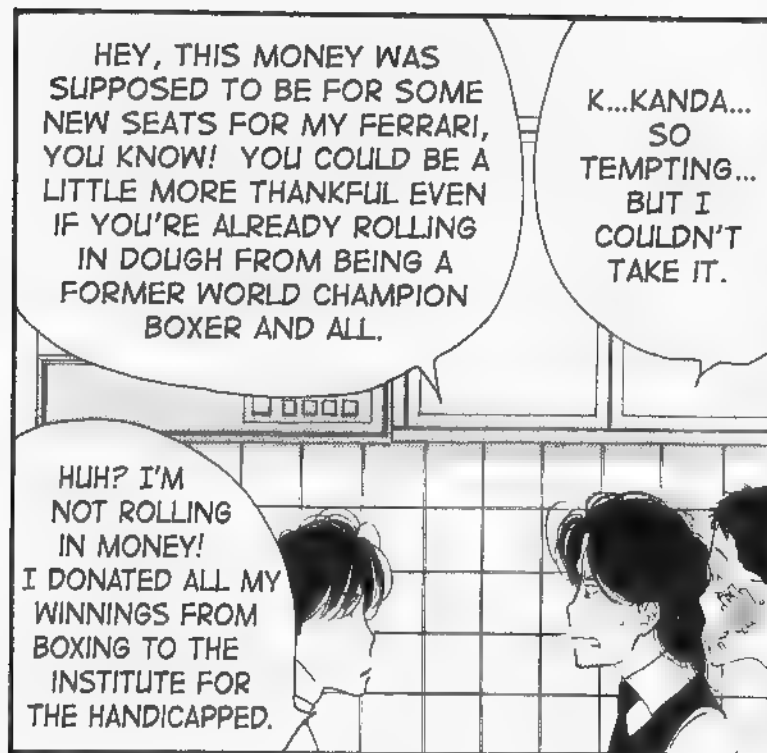
THERE'S THIS BOY AT THE STORE -- MY APPRENTICE. HE'S GOT A GOOD SENSE OF THINGS, AND ABOVE ALL, HE LOVES PASTRIES. WHEN I SAW HIM, I THOUGHT, "HE'S SURE TO BE A GREAT PÂTISSIER SOME DAY."

TO TELL YOU THE TRUTH, THERE WAS NEVER A TIME WHEN I THOUGHT WORKING AS A PÂTISSIER WAS FUN. THE ONLY REASON I PUT ENERGY INTO MY WORK WAS BECAUSE, AS A GAY MAN, I KNEW I DIDN'T HAVE A LOT OF JOB OPTIONS.



I WANT TO MAKE HIM INTO A FINE ARTISAN... LIKE YOU.







WELL,  
THAT'S  
THE  
SITUA  
TION

NO, I  
DIDN'T...

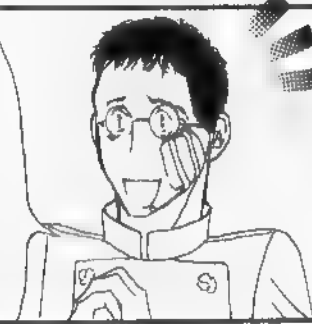


DIDN'T YOU  
REALIZE? THE  
OTHER DAY AT  
THE FAMILY  
RESTAURANT...  
YOU WERE  
CASUALLY  
TALKING TO THE  
WAITRESS.

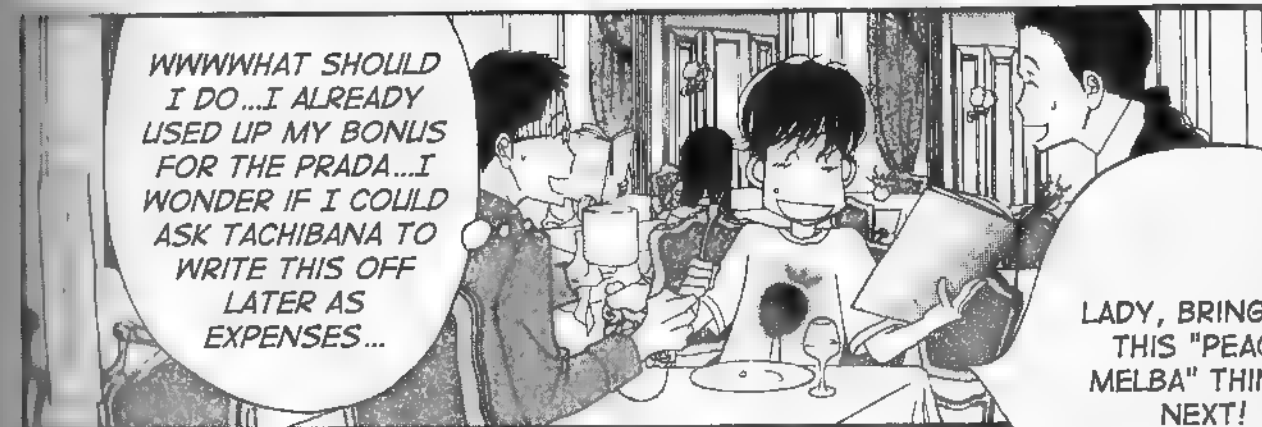
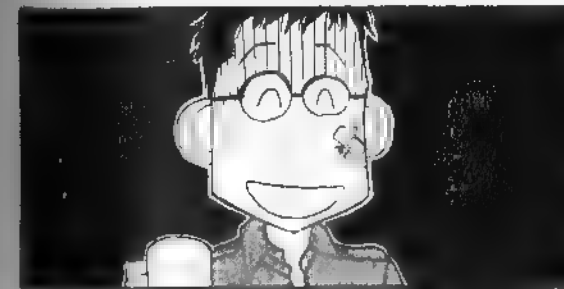


HMM?

THANK YOU,  
TACHIBANA! I'LL REALLY  
TRY! I WON'T HAVE  
AFFAIRS! AND WHEN MY  
SEXUAL URGES BECOME  
TOO MUCH, I'LL LIMIT IT  
TO A ONE-NIGHT ORGY  
WITH NO LINGERING  
EFFECTS!!



THANK  
YOU!

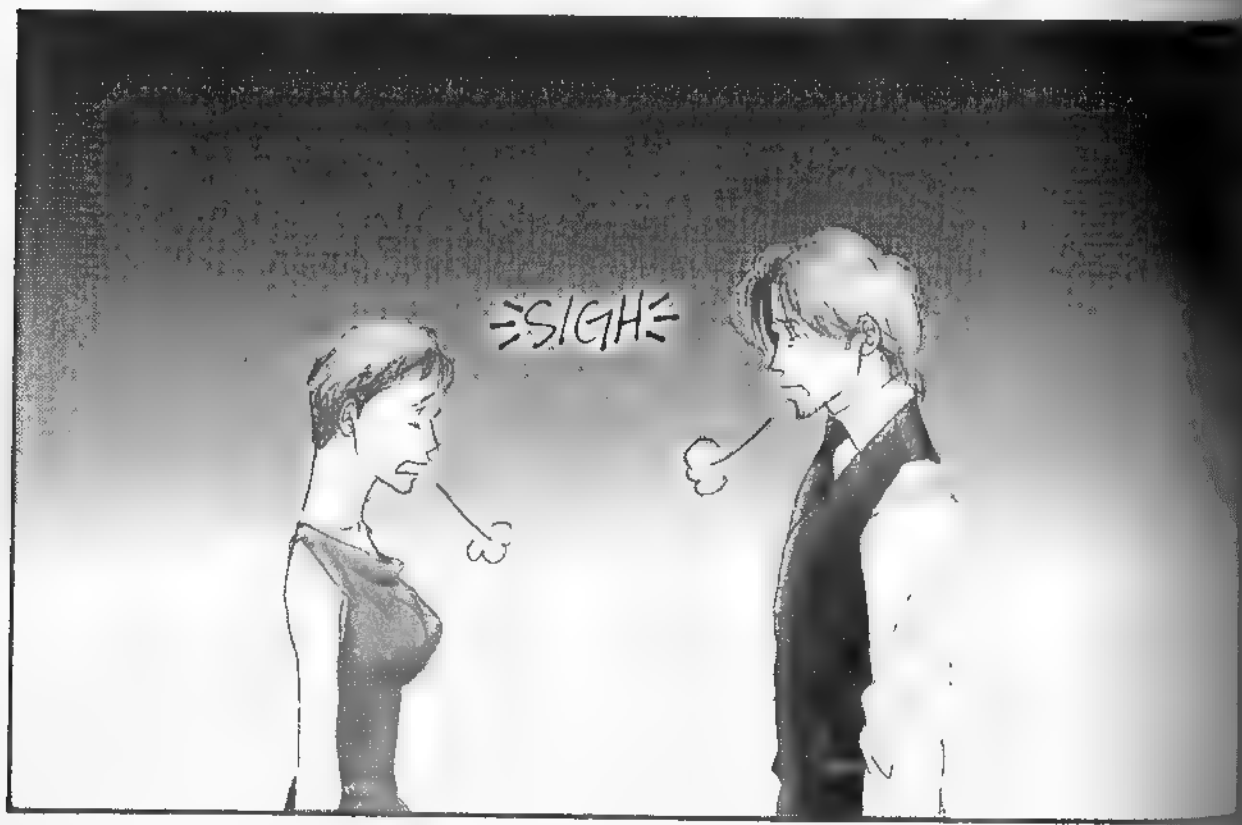
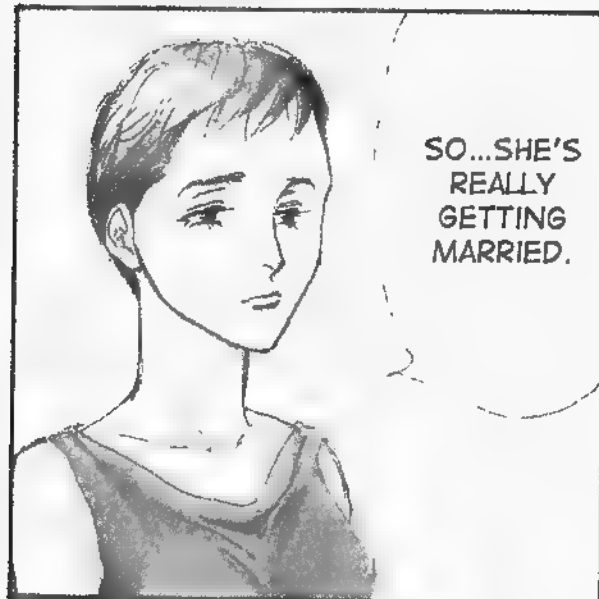


WWWWHAT SHOULD  
I DO...I ALREADY  
USED UP MY BONUS  
FOR THE PRADA...I  
WONDER IF I COULD  
ASK TACHIBANA TO  
WRITE THIS OFF  
LATER AS  
EXPENSES...

LADY, BRING ME  
THIS "PEACH  
MELBA" THINGY  
NEXT!



CRACK!



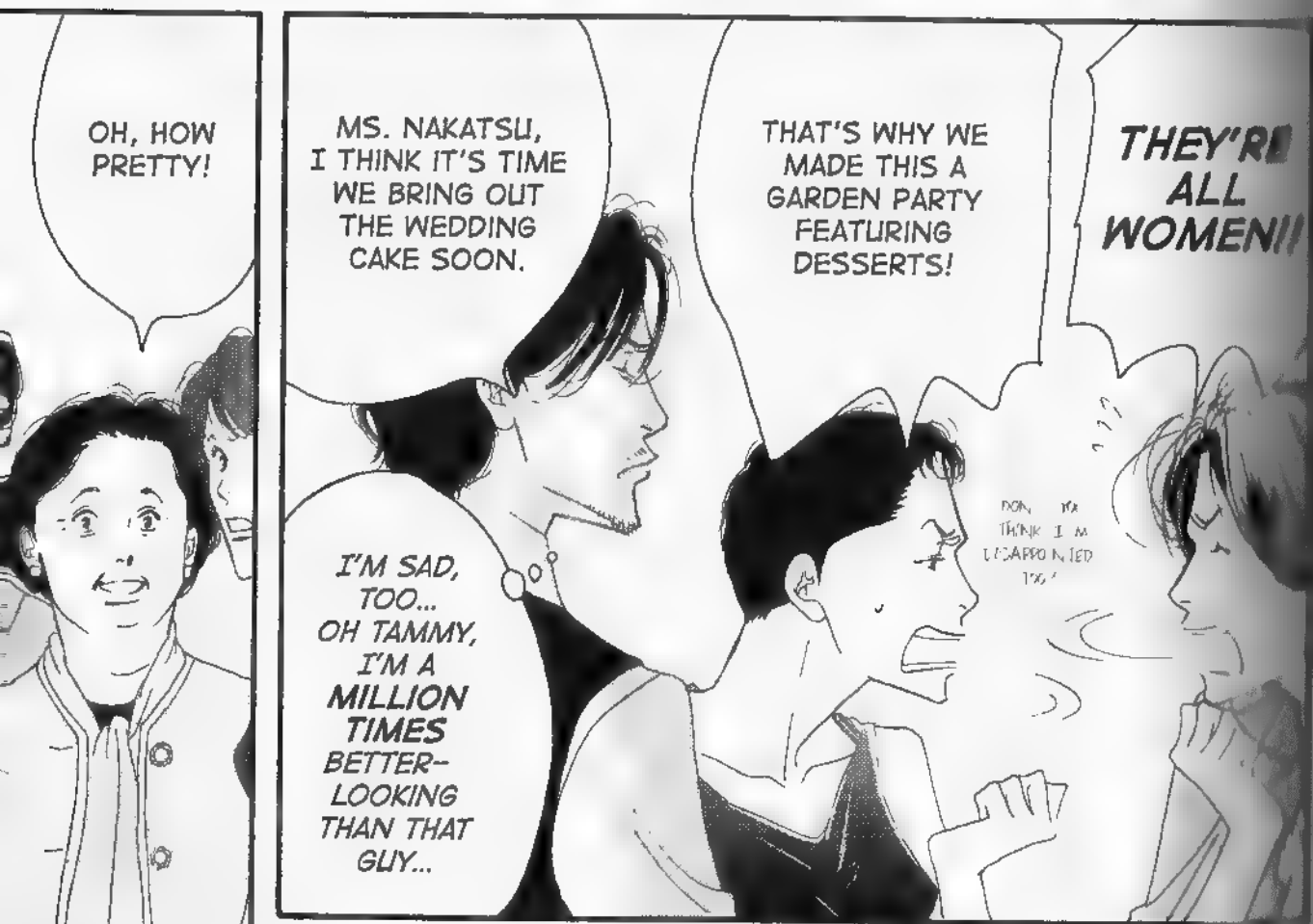


*Recipe 13*



THAT'S RIGHT.  
HE IS A PUBLIC  
OFFICIAL...AT  
A DAY-CARE  
NURSERY.  
SO HIS  
CO-WORKERS  
ARE...LOOK.

HEY, ISN'T KAGAMI'S  
HUBBY A PUBLIC  
OFFICIAL? SO WHY  
ARE ALL HIS FRIENDS  
AND CO-WORKERS?  
IN THIS RECESSION,  
A PUBLIC SERVANT  
FOR A HUSBAND IS  
GOLD...**GOLD!**



OH, HOW  
PRETTY!

MS. NAKATSU,  
I THINK IT'S TIME  
WE BRING OUT  
THE WEDDING  
CAKE SOON.

THAT'S WHY WE  
MADE THIS A  
GARDEN PARTY  
FEATURING  
DESSERTS!

**THEY'RE  
ALL  
WOMEN!!**

I'M SAD,  
TOO...  
OH TAMMY,  
I'M A  
**MILLION  
TIMES  
BETTER-  
LOOKING  
THAN THAT  
GUY...**

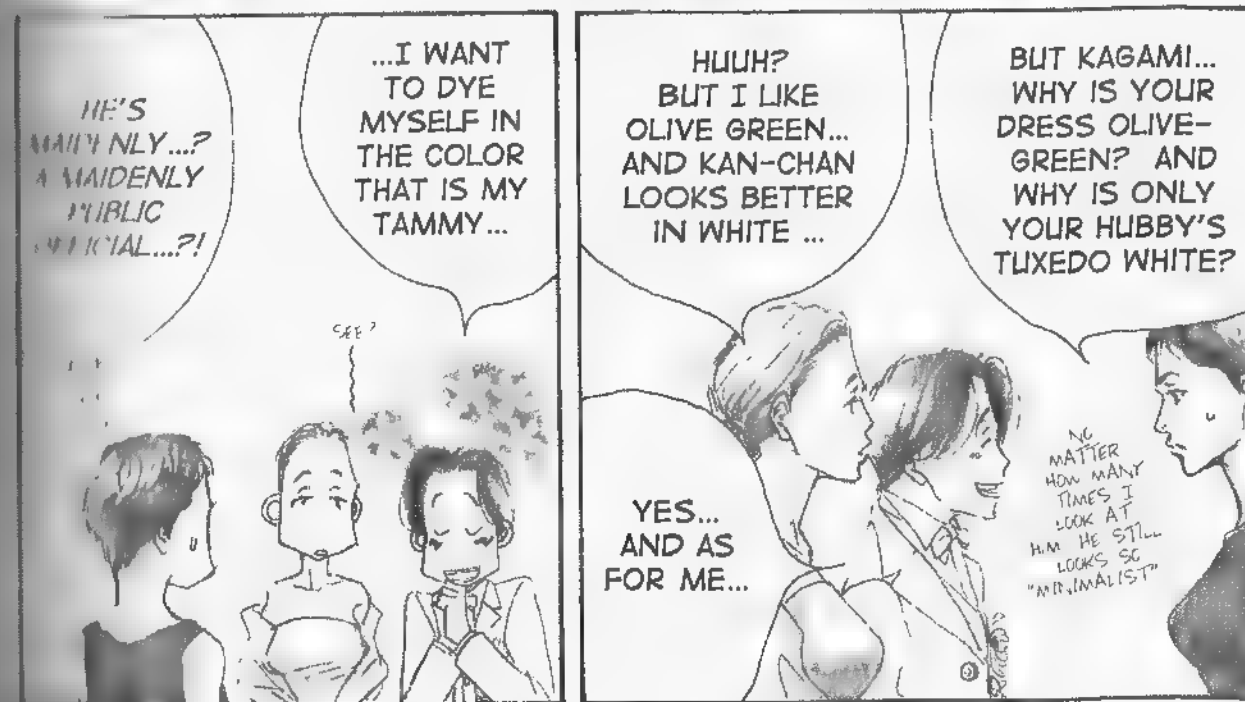
DON'T  
THINK I'M  
LEAVING  
YET!



CONGRA-  
TULATIONS!

YOU LOOK  
BEAUTIFUL,  
TAMIKO.  
THAT DRESS  
SUITS YOU.

CONGRATULATIONS,  
MR. KANICHI.  
SHE'S A BEAUTIFUL  
BRIDE.



HE'S  
MAINLY...?  
A MAIDENLY  
PUBLIC  
OFFICIAL...?!

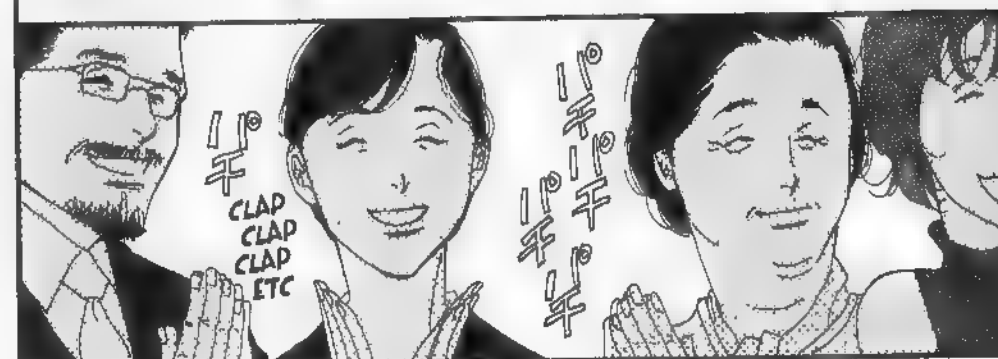
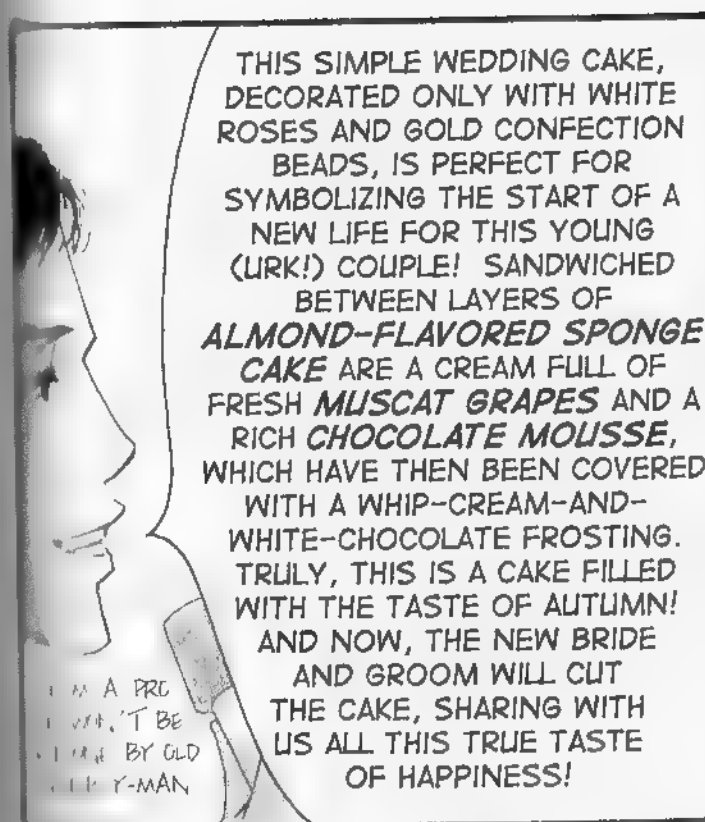
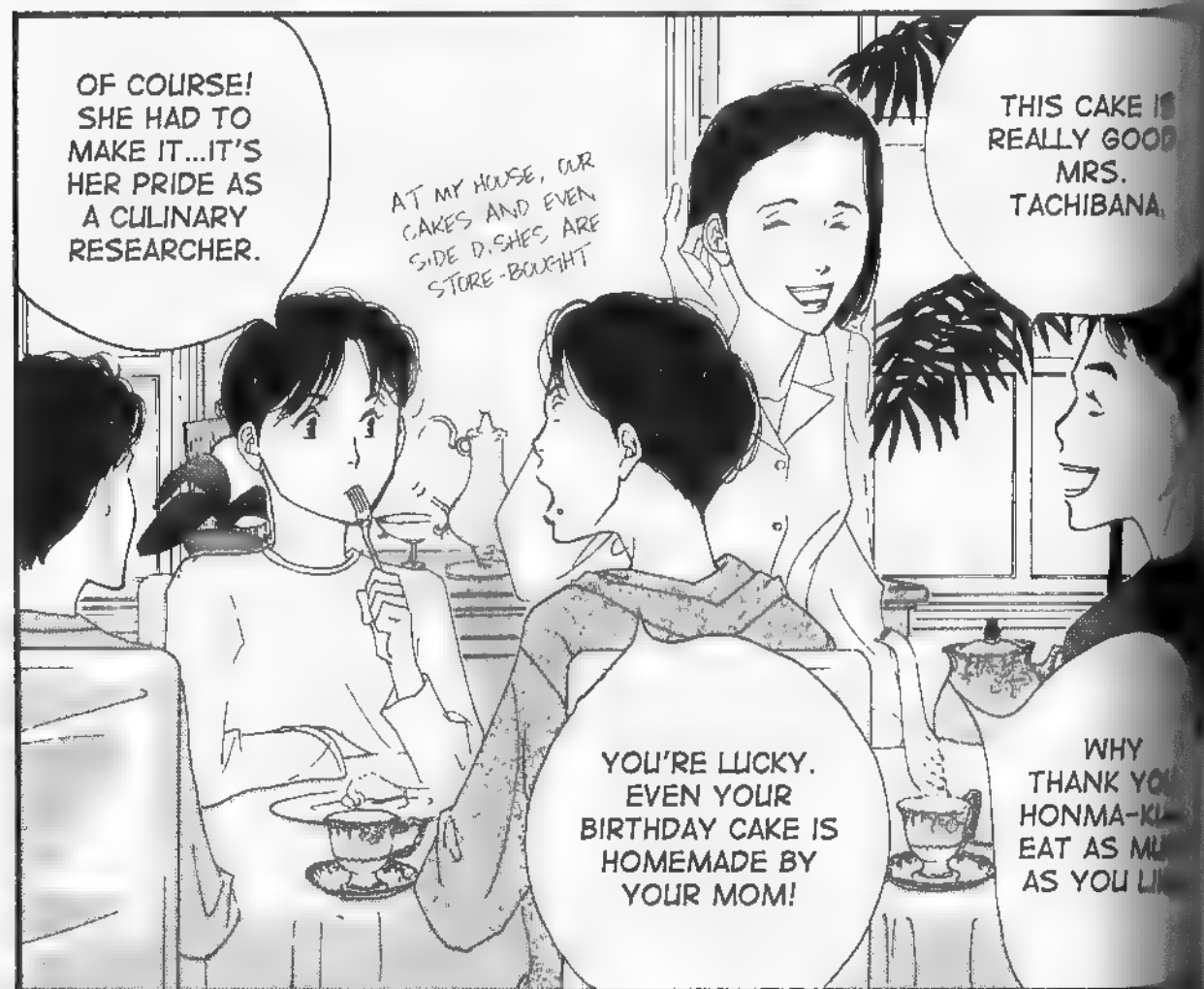
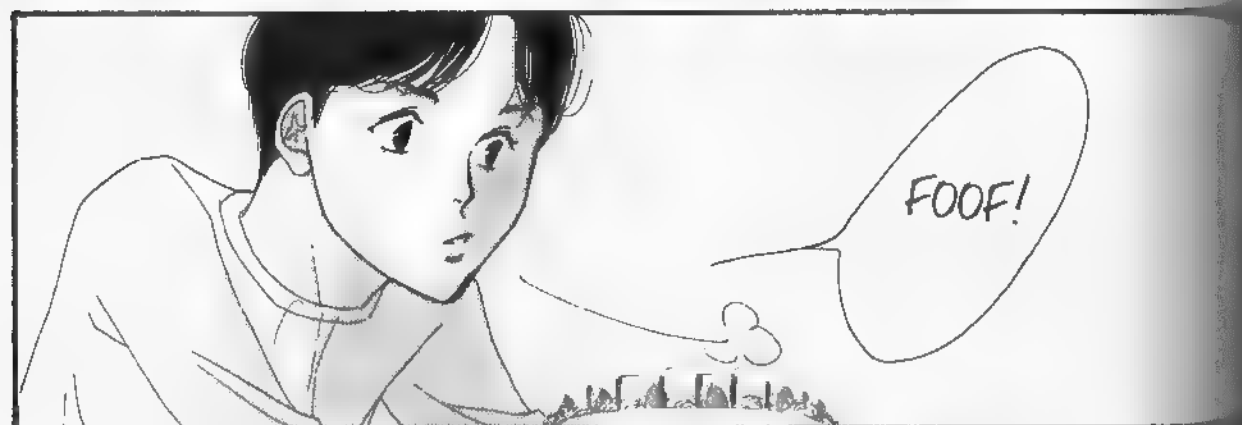
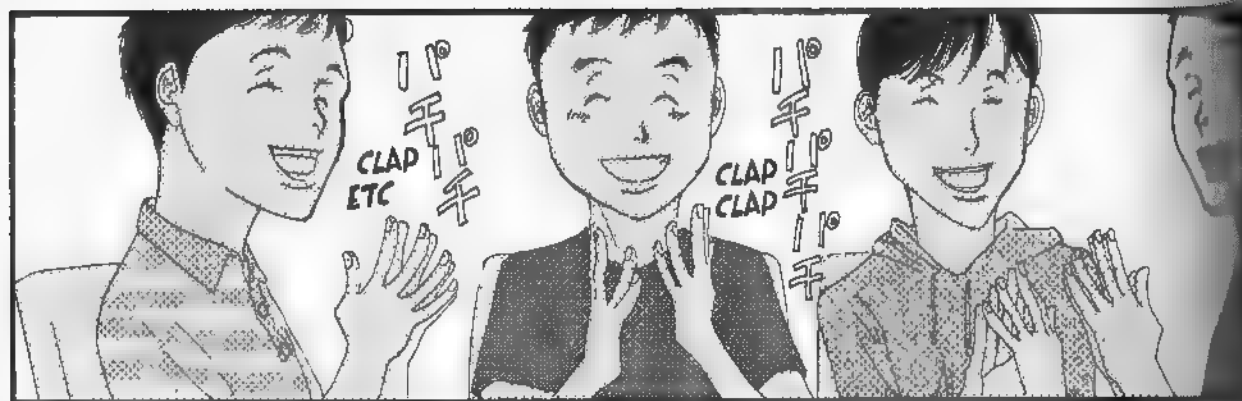
...I WANT  
TO DYE  
MYSELF IN  
THE COLOR  
THAT IS MY  
TAMMY...

HUUH?  
BUT I LIKE  
OLIVE GREEN...  
AND KAN-CHAN  
LOOKS BETTER  
IN WHITE ...

BUT KAGAMI...  
WHY IS YOUR  
DRESS OLIVE-  
GREEN? AND  
WHY IS ONLY  
YOUR HUBBY'S  
TUXEDO WHITE?

YES...  
AND AS  
FOR ME...

NO  
MATTER  
HOW MANY  
TIMES I  
LOOK AT  
HIM HE STILL  
LOOKS SO  
"MINIMALIST"



AN INTELLIGENT BOY  
LIKE HIM STILL NOT  
ABLE TO REMEMBER  
ANYTHING ABOUT THE  
ORDEAL...WHEN I THINK  
ABOUT HOW SCARED  
THAT CHILD MUST HAVE  
BEEN, I CAN'T...!



OH, BUT HE'S  
EXACTLY THE WAY  
HE WAS BEFORE!  
WHY, JUST  
TODAY HE TOLD  
THIS VERY FUNNY  
STORY...IT HAD  
BOTH ME AND  
CHIKAGE ROLLING  
ON THE FLOOR  
LAUGHING!

HE'S TOO  
CHEERFUL...  
HE'S TRYING  
TOO HARD.

THAT CHILD...IT  
HASN'T EVEN  
BEEN A MONTH  
SINCE THE  
INCIDENT, AND  
HE TELLS ME HE  
WANTS TO HAVE  
A BIRTHDAY  
PARTY...

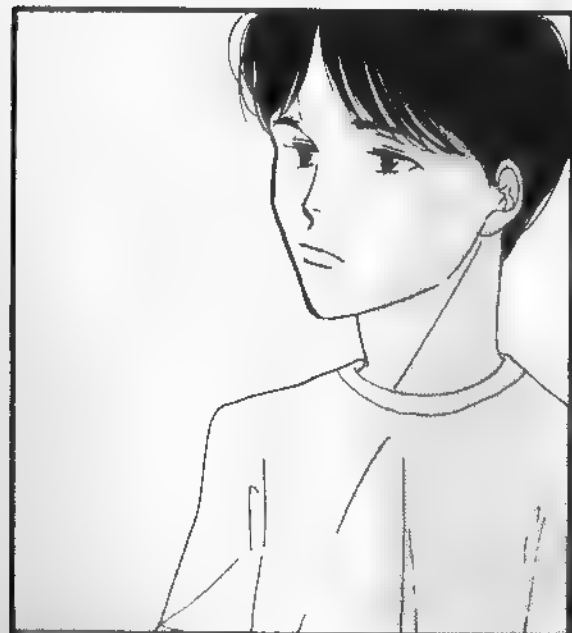


WILL HE HAVE  
TO CARRY THIS  
SCAR FOR THE  
REST OF HIS  
LIFE?! WHAT  
DID HE DO TO  
DESERVE  
THIS...?!

KEIICHIRO  
HAS A  
WHOLE  
LONG LIFE  
AHEAD OF  
HIM!



WHAT IF...  
WHAT IF  
SOMETHING  
UNSPEAKABLE  
WAS DONE  
TO HIM?  
IF THAT'S  
TRUE, THEN...!



I'LL NEVER  
FORGIVE THE  
MAN WHO  
DID THIS!



OH?  
KEIICHIRO,  
HAVE YOU  
ALREADY  
HAD  
ENOUGH  
CAKE?



YEAH.  
I'M JUST  
GOING  
TO THE  
BATHROOM.

UH...

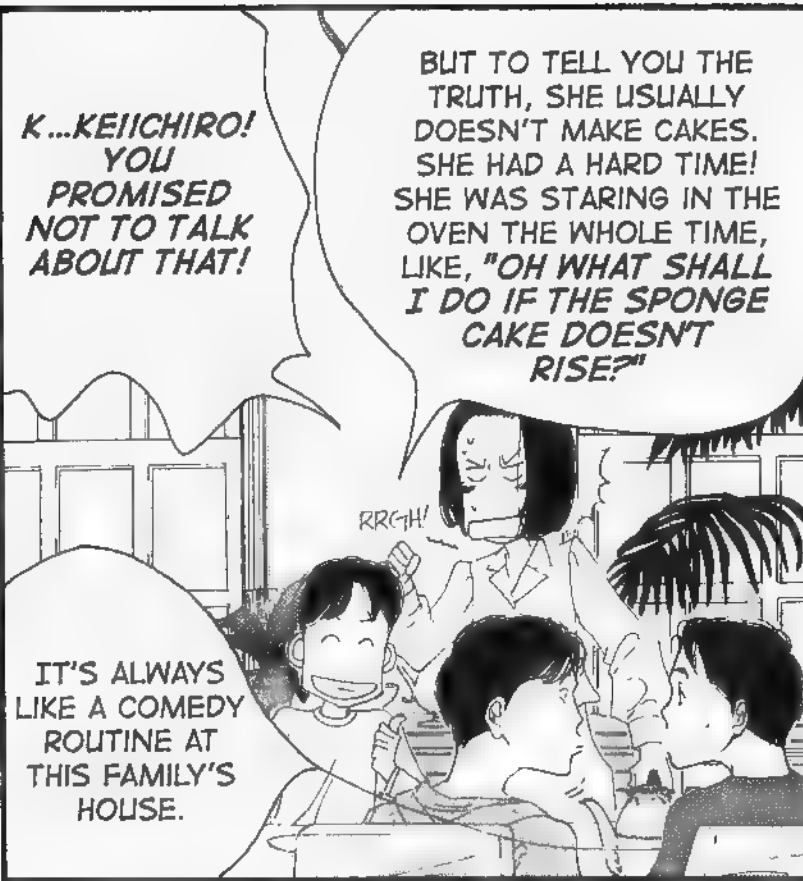
OK.



K...KEIICHIRO!  
YOU  
PROMISED  
NOT TO TALK  
ABOUT THAT!

BUT TO TELL YOU THE  
TRUTH, SHE USUALLY  
DOESN'T MAKE CAKES.  
SHE HAD A HARD TIME!  
SHE WAS STARING IN THE  
OVEN THE WHOLE TIME,  
LIKE, "OH WHAT SHALL  
I DO IF THE SPONGE  
CAKE DOESN'T  
RISE?"

IT'S ALWAYS  
LIKE A COMEDY  
ROUTINE AT  
THIS FAMILY'S  
HOUSE.



SHAKE  
SHAKE  
SHAKE  
SHAKE  
SHAKE



UGH!  
COUGH COUGH  
COUGH COUGH  
URK...

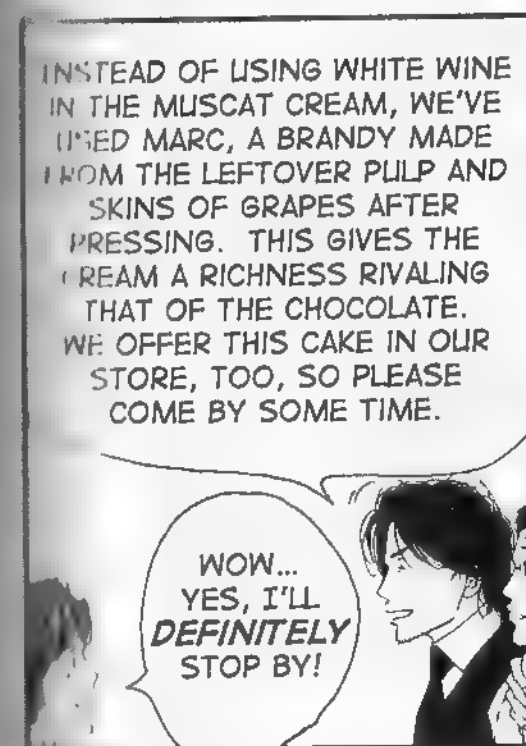
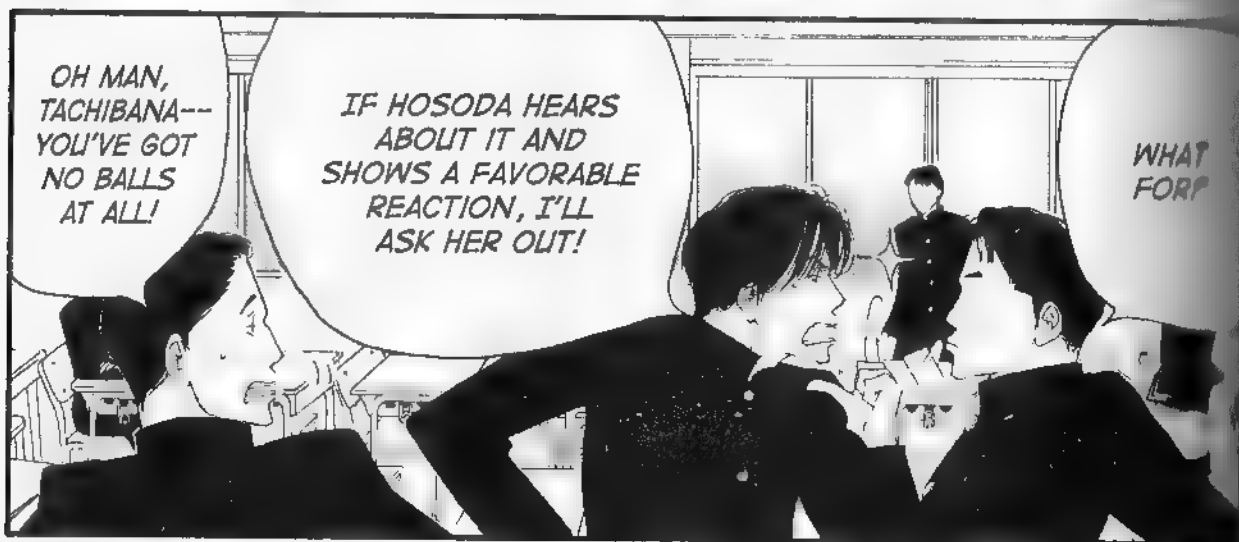


I'M SO  
GLAD  
MASTER  
KEI HAS  
RECOVERED.

THUNK!

FOOT!







OH...  
JESSYE  
NORMAN  
TICKETS!  
HOW DID  
YOU...

HEY,  
HAPPY  
BIRTHDAY!

YOU  
MENTIONED  
YOU LIKED  
SATIE LAST  
TIME, SO...

THANK  
YOU...!



LITTLE?  
NO WAY!  
I'M 5'9  
NOW!  
AND I'VE  
GOT RANKS  
IN BOTH  
KENDO AND  
JUDO.

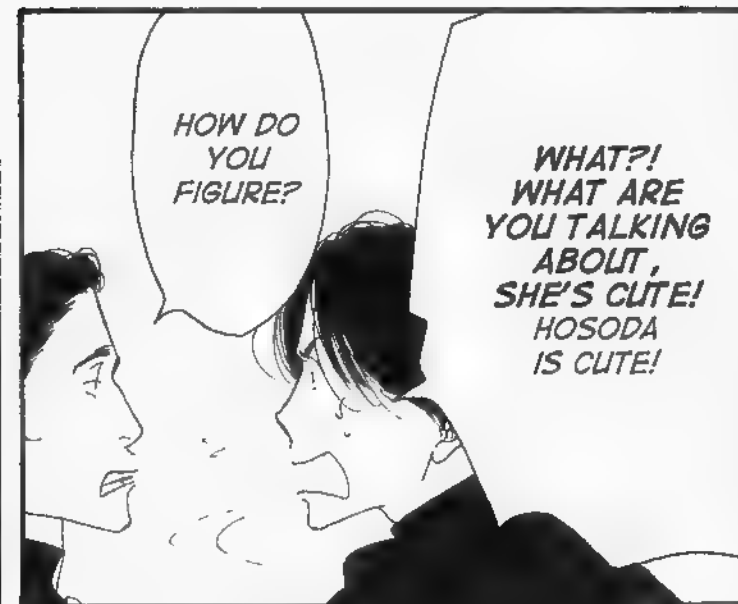
I SEE...SO, YOU  
DON'T NEED TO BE  
DRIVEN TO AND  
FROM SCHOOL? OF  
COURSE...YOU'RE  
NOT A LITTLE CHILD  
ANYMORE.

YOU REALLY  
DON'T HAVE  
TO WORRY  
ABOUT ME  
ANYMORE,  
MOTHER.



HIM AND  
HIS BIG-  
BREAST  
FETISH...

'CUZ SHE'S  
GOT BIG  
BREASTS...



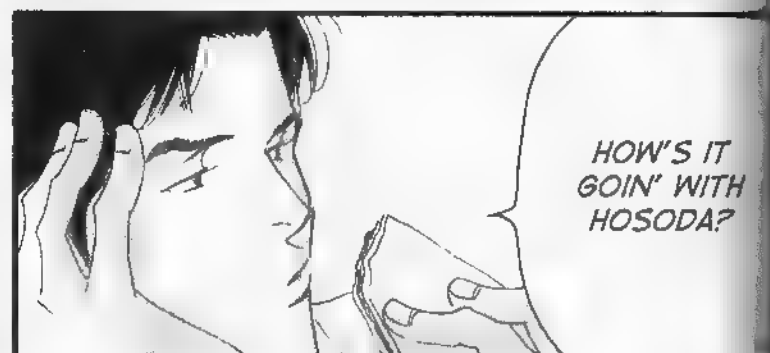
HOW DO  
YOU  
FIGURE?

WHAT?!  
WHAT ARE  
YOU TALKING  
ABOUT,  
SHE'S CUTE!  
HOSODA  
IS CUTE!



OH...

...WITH  
AYAKO?



HOW'S IT  
GOIN' WITH  
HOSODA?



S...

SURE...  
I'LL GO  
OUT WITH  
YOU.



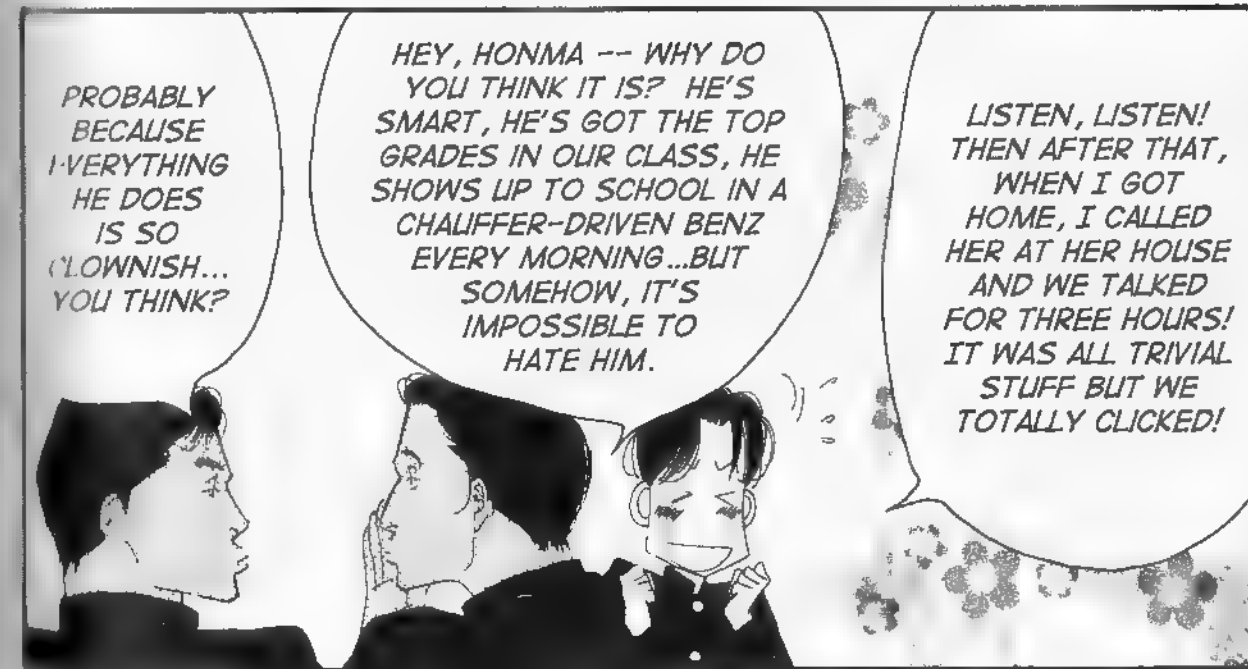
HEH.

HE HE  
HE HE...  
AND A  
TREAT IT  
WAS.

YOU DID HER!  
YOU DID IT  
WITH HOSODA,  
DIDN'T YOU?!



"AYA  
KO"?



PROBABLY  
BECAUSE  
I-VERYTHING  
HE DOES  
IS SO  
CLOWNISH...  
YOU THINK?

HEY, HONMA -- WHY DO  
YOU THINK IT IS? HE'S  
SMART, HE'S GOT THE TOP  
GRADES IN OUR CLASS, HE  
SHOWS UP TO SCHOOL IN A  
CHAUFFEUR-DRIVEN BENZ  
EVERY MORNING...BUT  
SOMEHOW, IT'S  
IMPOSSIBLE TO  
HATE HIM.

LISTEN, LISTEN!  
THEN AFTER THAT,  
WHEN I GOT  
HOME, I CALLED  
HER AT HER HOUSE  
AND WE TALKED  
FOR THREE HOURS!  
IT WAS ALL TRIVIAL  
STUFF BUT WE  
TOTALLY CLICKED!



THEY WERE SAYING THAT IF GLASSES ARE YOUR THING, THEN ONO WAS CLITER THAN I WAS...THEY WONDERED WHY YOU WERE GOING OUT WITH SUCH A NOTHING LIKE ME.

THAT'S WHY I GOT CONTACTS... AND CHANGED MY HAIR. BUT I CAN'T TAKE IT ANYMORE...!



YOU SEE? IT'S HARD TO BELIEVE YOU WHEN SUCH SMOOTH WORDS COME SO EASILY FROM YOUR MOUTH.

DO YOU KNOW WHAT EVERYONE WAS SAYING WHEN WE WERE GOING OUT TOGETHER?

WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT? IT'S BECAUSE I LOVE YOU! IT'S BECAUSE I REALLY HAD TO SEE YOU HAPPY, THAT'S ALL...



AND ANYWAY, YOU LOOK MUCH MORE RELAXED WHEN YOU'RE WITH HONMA AND YOUR FRIENDS THAN WITH ME!

WHAT DOES IT MATTER? WE'RE GRADUATING TODAY.

WHO SAID THOSE THINGS? JUST TELL ME AND I'LL KICK THEIR...



HE'S NOT AS HANDSOME AS YOU, AND TO BE HONEST, HE'S NO GOOD AT SEX.

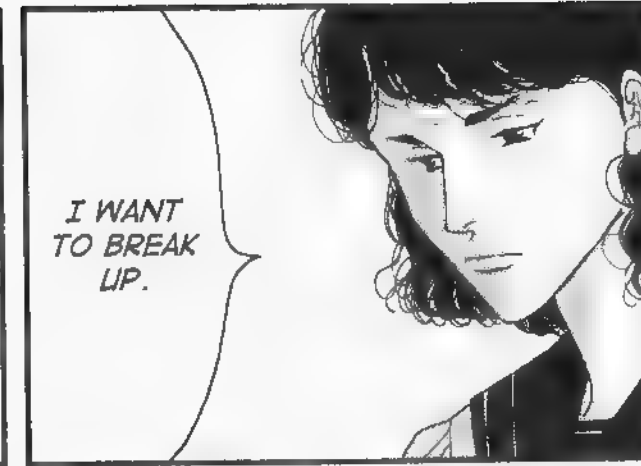


I'M SEEING SOMEONE ELSE.

HOW CAN SOME GUY TAKE YOUR PLACE?!



HUH?



I WANT TO BREAK UP.

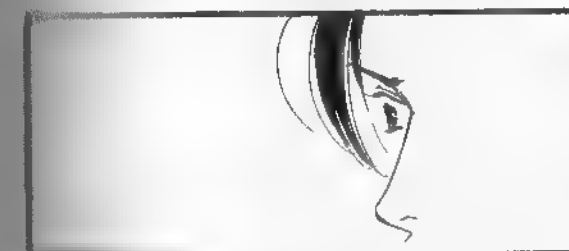


I'D DECIDED LONG BEFORE. I WAS GOING TO BREAK UP WITH YOU WHEN WE GRADUATED.

IT'S NOT SUDDEN.

WH... WHAT...?

WHY...? AYAKO... WHY ALL OF A SUDDEN...



YES, YOU DID.

WHY?!

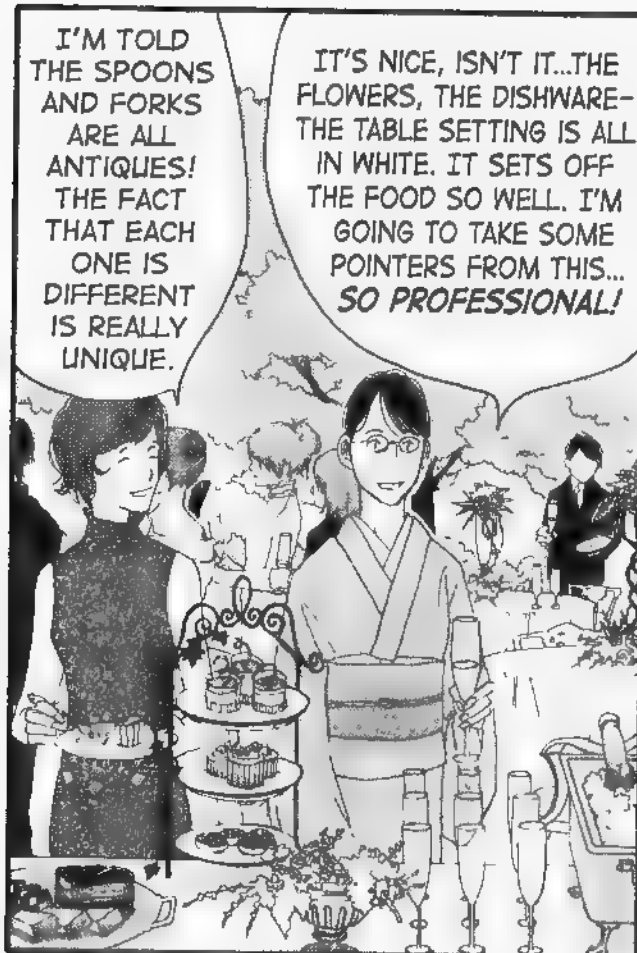
OUR COLLEGES ARE IN THE SAME CITY...SO WHY?! DID I DO SOMETHING WRONG?!

YOU'RE ALWAYS TRYING TOO HARD TO PLEASE ME.



EVERYWHERE I WANT TO GO, EVERYTHING I LIKE TO DO, EVERYTHING I WANT TO BUY!!

WHY GO THROUGH SO MUCH TROUBLE FOR SOMEONE LIKE ME?!



I'M TOLD THE SPOONS AND FORKS ARE ALL ANTIQUES! THE FACT THAT EACH ONE IS DIFFERENT IS REALLY UNIQUE.

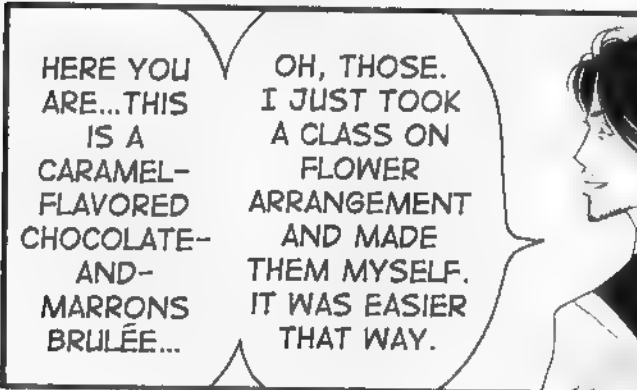
IT'S NICE, ISN'T IT...THE FLOWERS, THE DISHWARE—THE TABLE SETTING IS ALL IN WHITE. IT SETS OFF THE FOOD SO WELL. I'M GOING TO TAKE SOME POINTERS FROM THIS... **SO PROFESSIONAL!**



OH, OK... IF YOU SAY SO.

WE'VE FINISHED HANDING OUT THE WEDDING CAKE, SO YOU CAN GO AHEAD AND TRADE PLACES WITH EIJI NOW.

WAS THE VICTIM OF VERY BAD TIMING?



HERE YOU ARE...THIS IS A CARAMEL-FLAVORED CHOCOLATE-AND-MARRONS BRULÉE...

OH, THOSE. I JUST TOOK A CLASS ON FLOWER ARRANGEMENT AND MADE THEM MYSELF. IT WAS EASIER THAT WAY.



SPEAKING OF WHICH...WHICH FLORIST DID YOU GET THE FLOWERS FROM TACHIBANA? THEY'RE PRETTY BUT THEY LOOK EXPENSIVE...



YES, AND OVER HERE WE HAVE THE CHEESE AND NUTS TARTE

I'VE NEVER BEEN THAT IMPRESSED WITH TACHIBANA BEFORE, BUT HE IS REALLY...



I MADE IT. WITH SCABIOSAS, LILACS, AND DIAMOND LILIES.

WHAT? THEN WHAT ABOUT THE BRIDAL BOUQUET?



BUT I FEEL MORE WANTED WHEN I'M WITH HIM.



DING  
DONG  
RING  
GONG



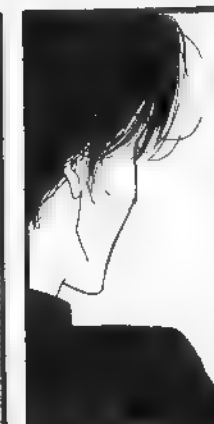
TACHI-MANA, DO YOU HAVE A MINUTE? THERE'S SOMETHING I WANT TO TALK TO YOU ABOUT...

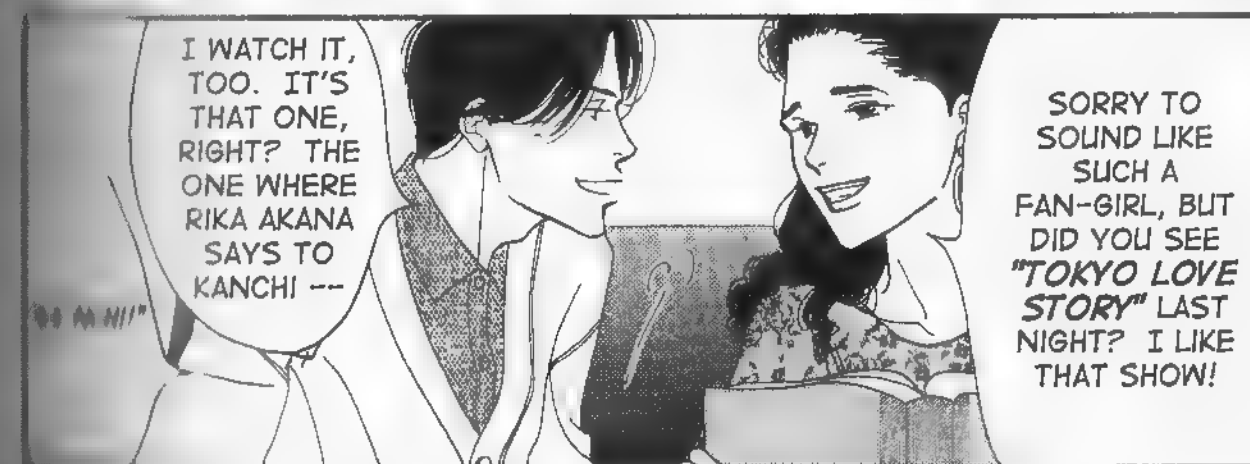
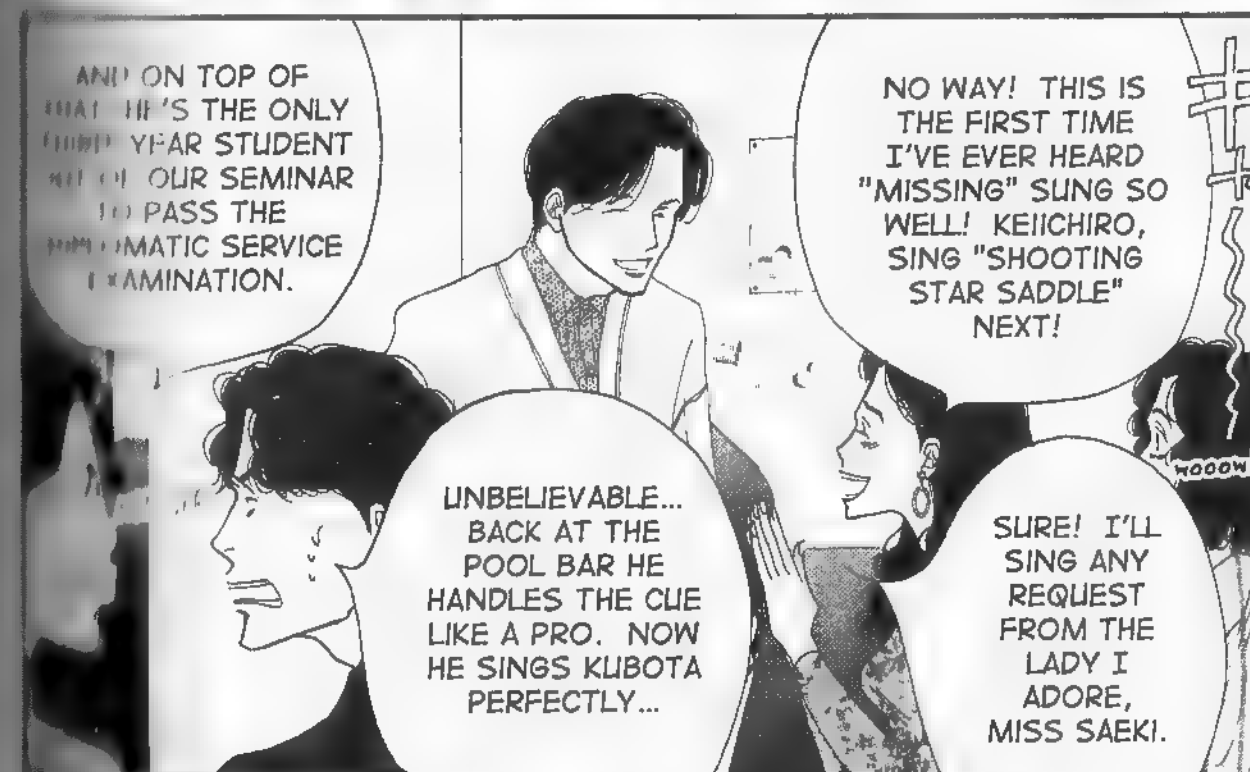
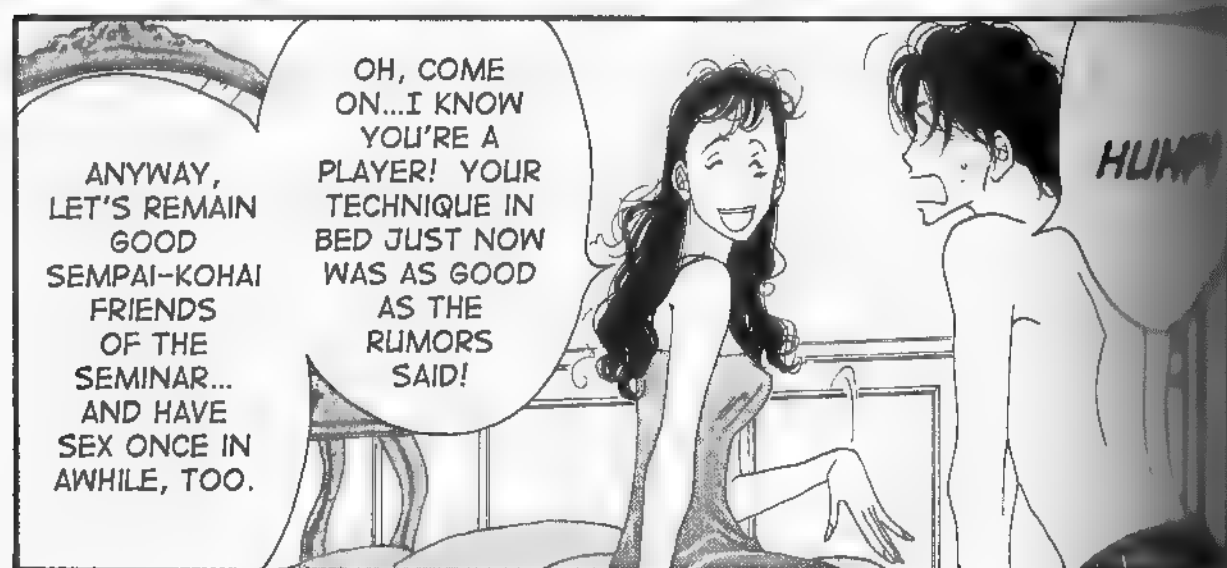
U...

UM...



WHAT?







IT'S DELICIOUS!  
I'D LOVE  
TO TAKE  
SOME OF  
THIS HOME  
WITH ME!



UNDER THE SLICES OF  
CRISPILY-CARAMELIZED  
RED APPLES LIES A  
PUMPKIN PASTE FULL OF  
BUTTER AND CREAM. IT  
IS A PIE FILLED WITH THE  
CONTRASTING TARTNESS  
OF THE APPLE AND  
SWEETNESS OF THE  
PUMPKIN.

THE  
"NOR-  
MANDE."

I THOUGHT  
THIS WAS  
APPLE PIE,  
BUT  
THERE'S  
PUMPKIN  
INSIDE!  
WHAT A  
SUR-  
PRISE!



PARDON ME! HOW  
ABOUT THIS  
SEAFOOD COCKTAIL,  
MADE FROM LAYERS  
OF COD ROE,  
SALMON ROE,  
SCALLOPS AND  
GELEÉ OF  
CONSOUMÉ? WE  
ALSO HAVE MUSSELS  
SAUTÉED IN GARLIC  
BUTTER, AS WELL AS  
A YOUNG CHICKEN  
STEWED IN  
OLIVES.

DAMN, I  
STUPID  
E! J!



UM...I'M NOT  
REALLY INTO  
SWEETS. DO  
YOU HAVE  
ANYTHING  
ELSE...?

I  
DID IT!  
MY  
FIRST  
PASTRY  
IDEA!!

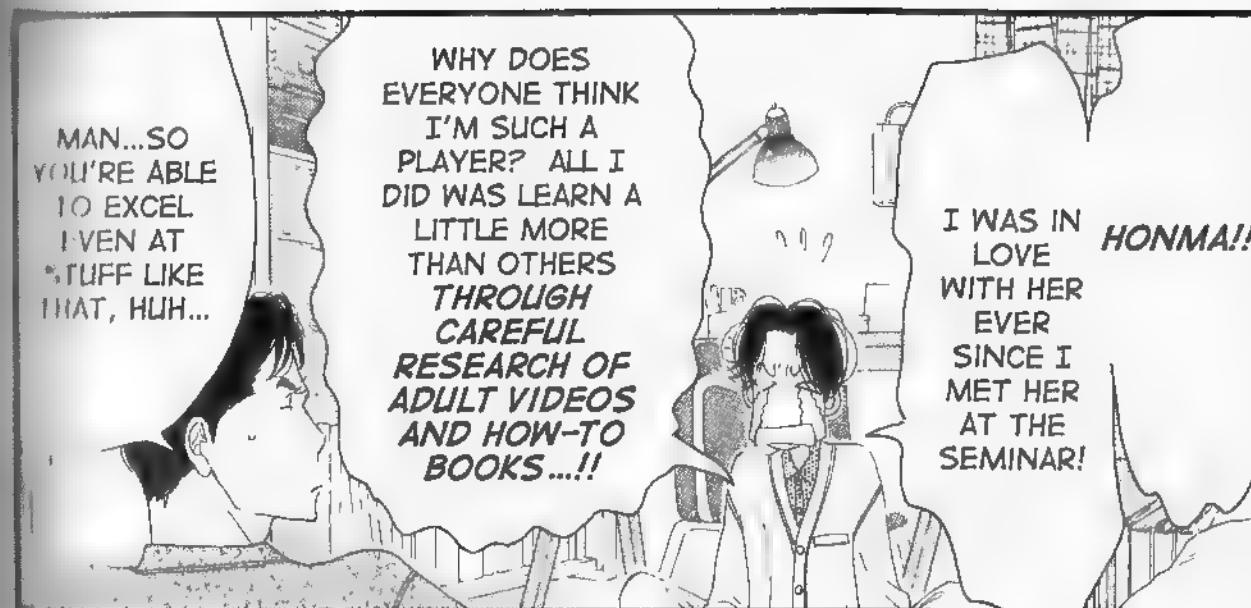
HOW  
SHOULD I  
KNOW?  
THEN DON'T  
EAT!



AND WHY  
IS IT THAT  
WOMEN  
HAVE SUCH  
BOTTOM-  
LESS  
APPETITES  
...?

OK! AFTER  
WE'VE  
REFRESHED  
OUR PALATES  
WITH THIS,  
LET'S GO FOR  
A SECOND  
ROUND OF  
CAKES!

OOOH...  
THIS  
MUSHROOM  
QUICHE IS  
SOOO  
GOOOD...!!



MAN...SO  
YOU'RE ABLE  
TO EXCEL  
EVEN AT  
STUFF LIKE  
THAT, HUH...

WHY DOES  
EVERYONE THINK  
I'M SUCH A  
PLAYER? ALL I  
DID WAS LEARN A  
LITTLE MORE  
THAN OTHERS  
THROUGH  
CAREFUL  
RESEARCH OF  
ADULT VIDEOS  
AND HOW-TO  
BOOKS...!!

I WAS IN  
LOVE  
WITH HER  
EVER  
SINCE I  
MET HER  
AT THE  
SEMINAR!

HONMA!!



SHE SAID HER FIANCÉ  
PASSED THE DIPLOMATIC  
SERVICE EXAM THIS YEAR,  
TOO! I DON'T WANT TO  
SEE HIS FACE!!

HUH?!



I'M NOT GOING  
TO BECOME A  
DIPLOMAT. I'M  
GONNA TAKE THE  
BAR EXAM  
INSTEAD.



OH?



NO PROBLEM  
THERE... 'CUZ I'LL  
DEFINITELY PASS  
BY NEXT YEAR,  
BUT YOU'LL NEED  
ABOUT TWO MORE  
YEARS OF  
STUDYING...

WHAT? FOR  
SUCH A PETTY  
REASON?! I'M  
TAKING THE BAR  
EXAM, TOO -- IF  
YOU TAKE IT,  
THAT MEANS  
ONE LESS  
OPENING FOR  
SURE!



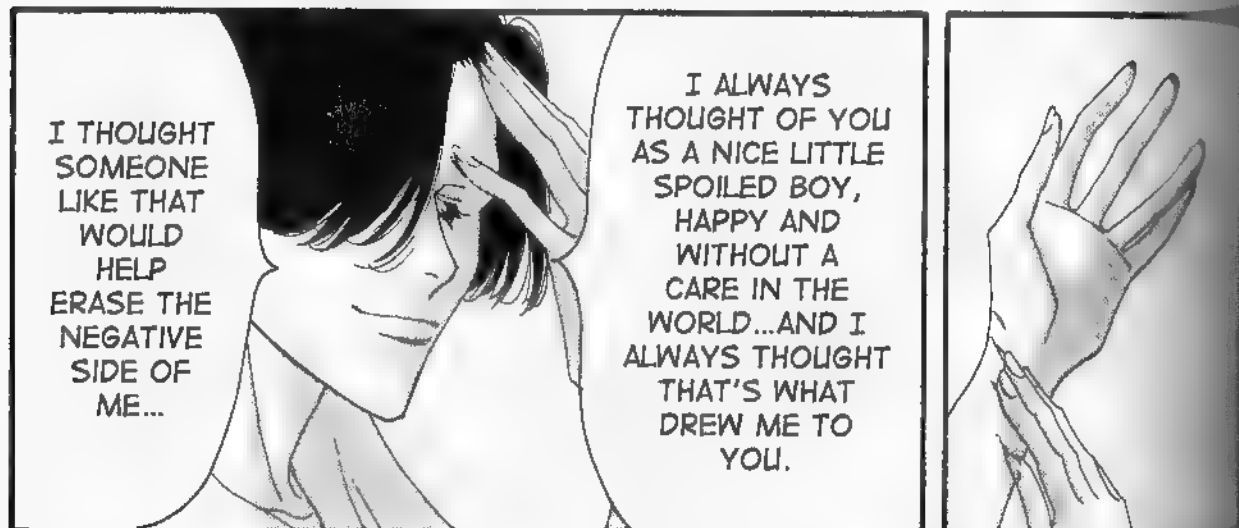
I WAS HAPPY THAT  
EVEN AFTER I TOLD  
YOU ABOUT MY PAST,  
YOU STILL ASKED  
ME TO LIVE WITH  
YOU WHEN WE  
BOTH PASSED  
THE BAR EXAM...  
BUT I'M SORRY.



THEN  
WHY?!  
WHY?!

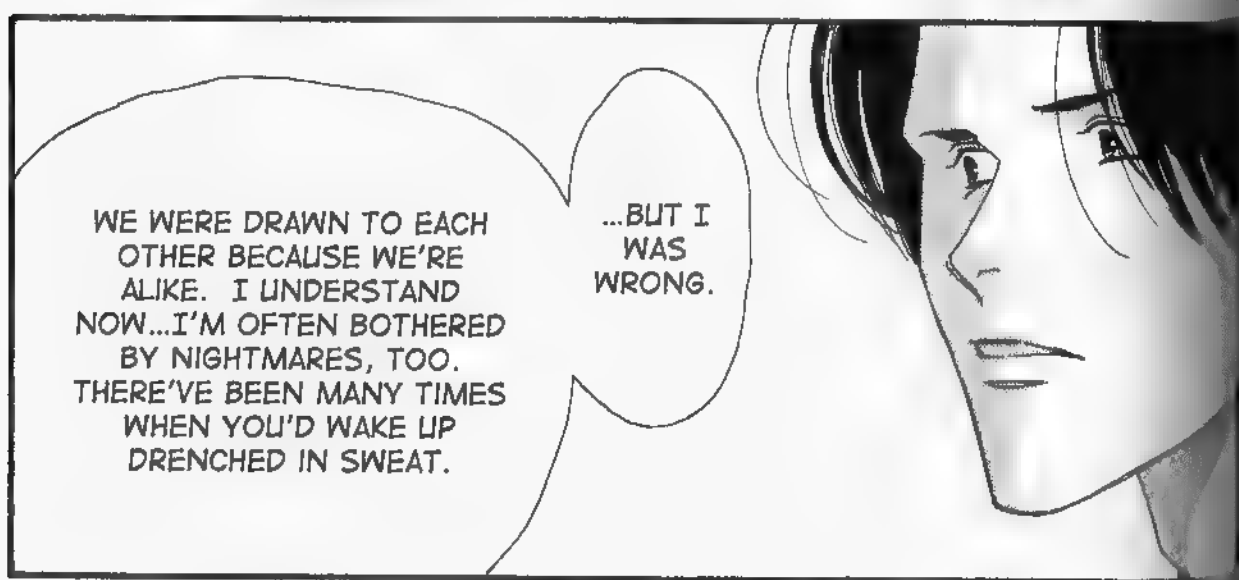
UH-UH.

IS IT  
ANOTHER  
MAN?



I THOUGHT  
SOMEONE  
LIKE THAT  
WOULD  
HELP  
ERASE THE  
NEGATIVE  
SIDE OF  
ME...

I ALWAYS  
THOUGHT OF YOU  
AS A NICE LITTLE  
SPOILED BOY,  
HAPPY AND  
WITHOUT A  
CARE IN THE  
WORLD...AND I  
ALWAYS THOUGHT  
THAT'S WHAT  
DREW ME TO  
YOU.



WE WERE DRAWN TO EACH  
OTHER BECAUSE WE'RE  
ALIKE. I UNDERSTAND  
NOW...I'M OFTEN BOTHERED  
BY NIGHTMARES, TOO.  
THERE'VE BEEN MANY TIMES  
WHEN YOU'D WAKE UP  
DRENCHED IN SWEAT.

...BUT I  
WAS  
WRONG.



BUT SAKI,  
WEREN'T YOU  
JUST EATING A  
SWEET BEAN  
BUN?

OOH, NOW I  
WANNA HAVE  
SOME.

I DON'T  
WANT A  
WHOLE  
SERVING, I  
JUST WANT  
A TASTE.



THE RE'S  
NOT ALL  
OVER  
YOUR  
MOUTH!

AHHH  
...

ALL  
RIGHT,  
THEN...  
SAY  
AHHH.



...AND  
IT'S NEVER  
JUST A  
TASTE,  
EITHER...

ANOTHER  
TASTE!!

BUT KEI'S  
EGG-FRIED  
RICE IS REALLY  
GOOD ♡

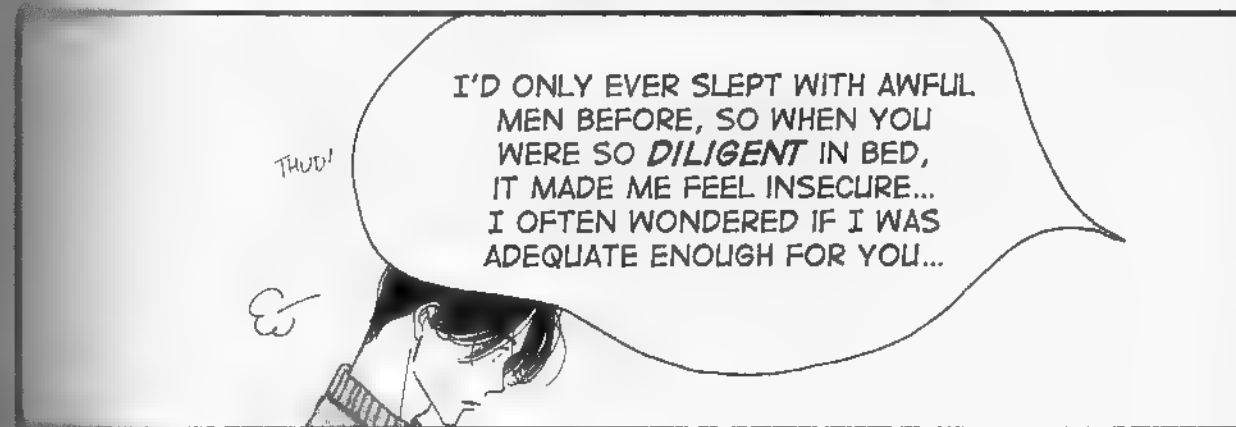
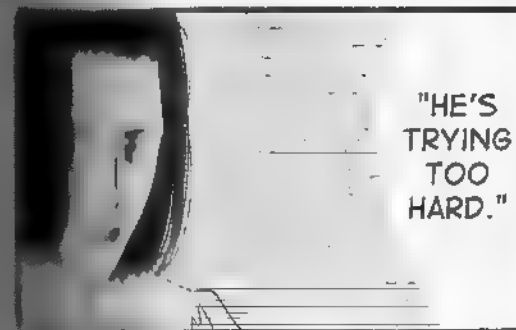
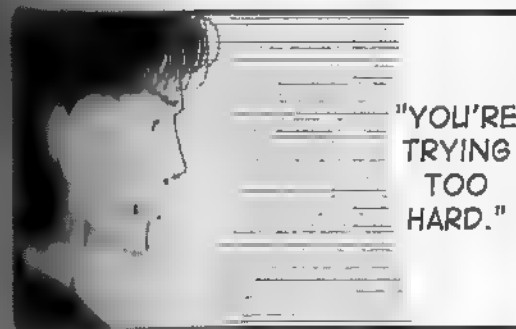
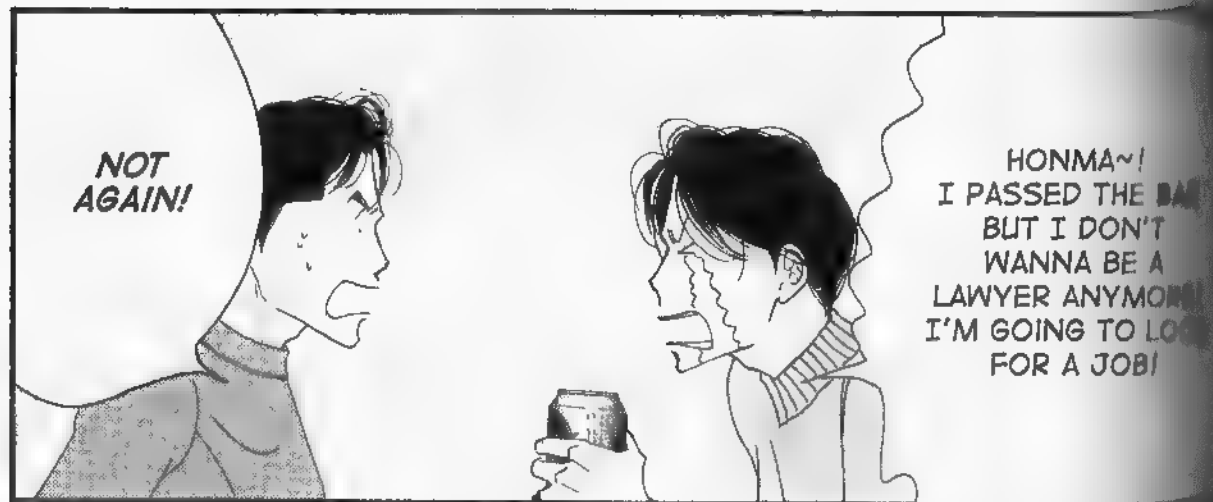


I'M  
SORRY...

I CAN'T  
LIVE WITH  
YOU, KEI...



HUH?



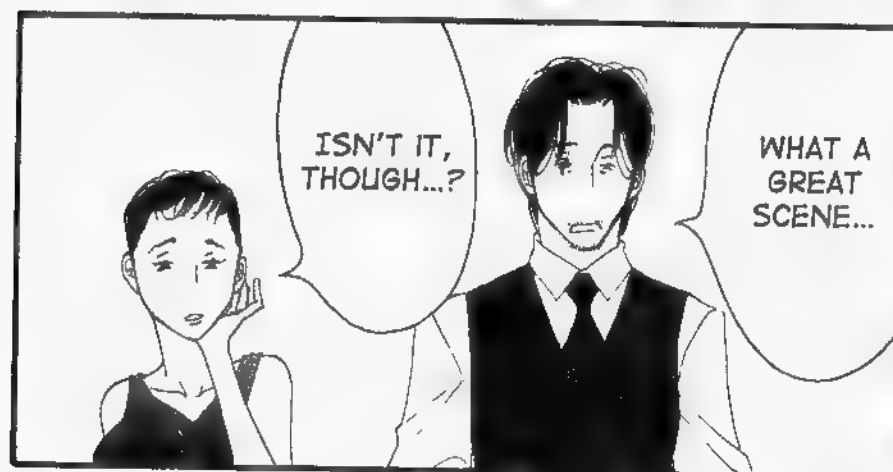


I PROMISE  
THAT  
TAMIKO AND  
I WILL MAKE  
A HAPPY  
FAMILY  
TOGETHER.



TAMMY  
...

THIS  
IS THE  
FIRST  
TIME  
I'VE  
SEEN  
YOU  
SMILE



ISN'T IT,  
THOUGH...?

WHAT A  
GREAT  
SCENE...



EACH  
OTHER'S  
TYPE

TYPICALLY,  
IT WOULD BE  
PERFECTLY  
PLAUSIBLE TO  
FALL IN LOVE IN  
THIS SITUATION--  
BUT NOT WITH  
THIS ONE.



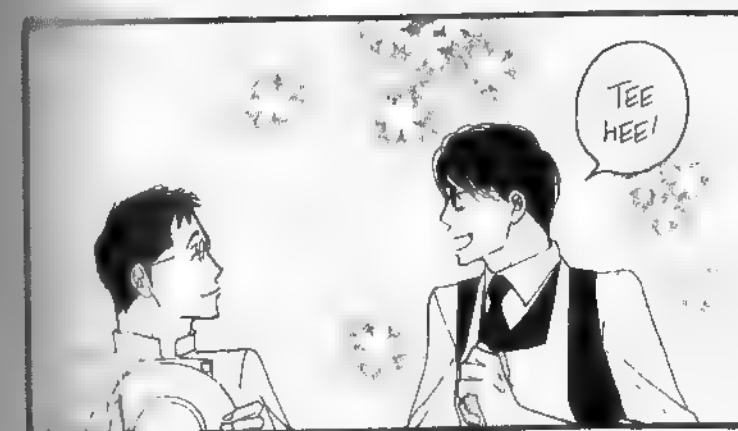
OK! I'LL  
HELP OUT  
TOO, MR.  
CHIKAGE.

0 YEARS  
LATER  
STILL  
PRETTY  
MUCH THE  
SAME  
PERSON



?

FORGET  
IT...  
FORGET  
I EVEN  
ASKED  
YOU...



TEE  
HEE!



IT'S OK.  
TACHIBANA  
TOLD ME TO  
WORK BACK  
HERE.

HUH?!  
B-BUT...!

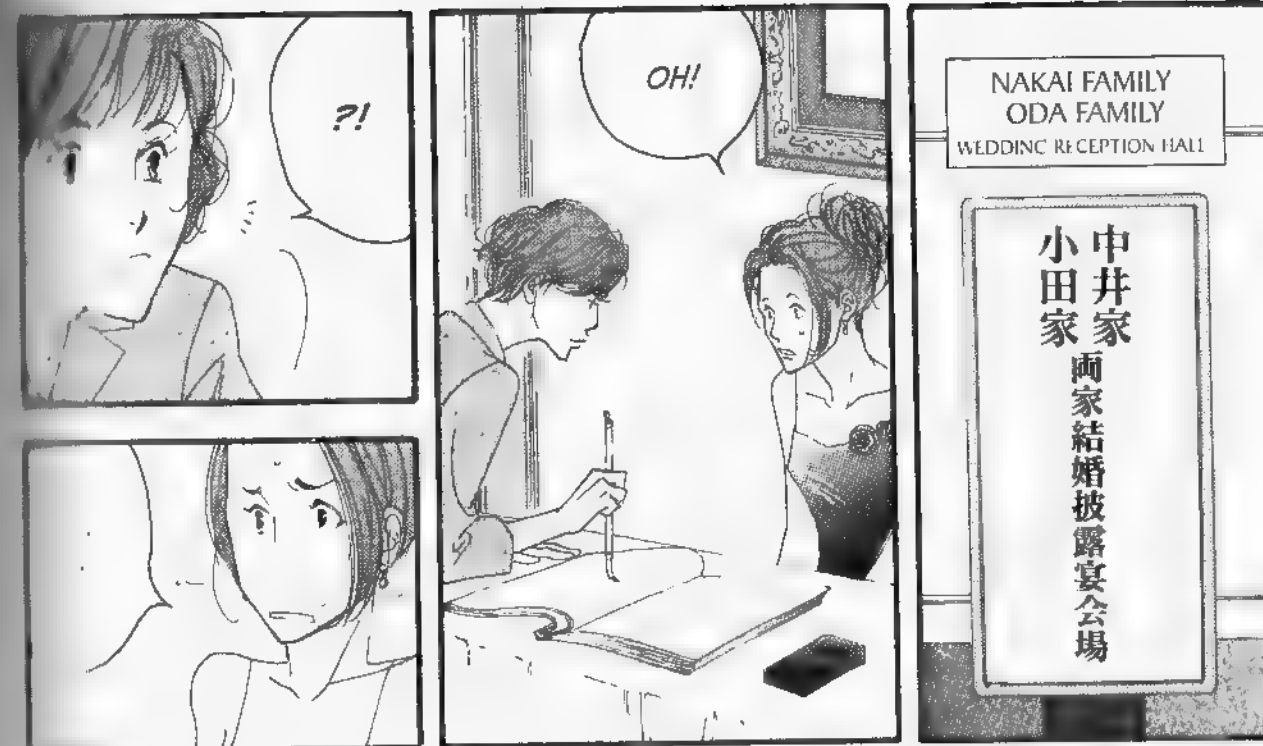
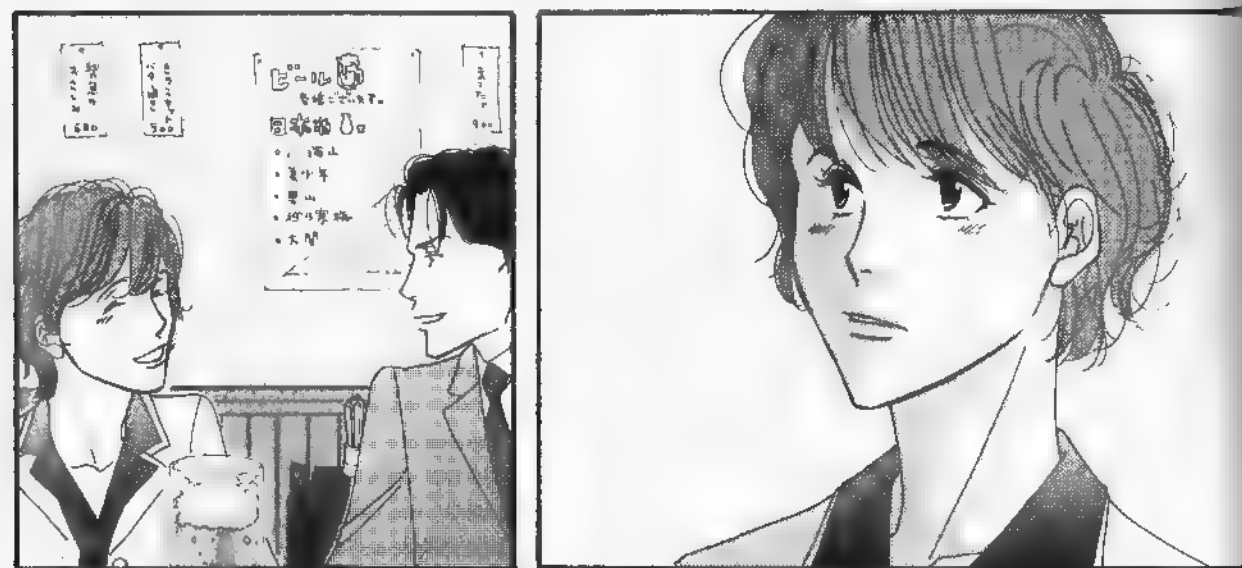
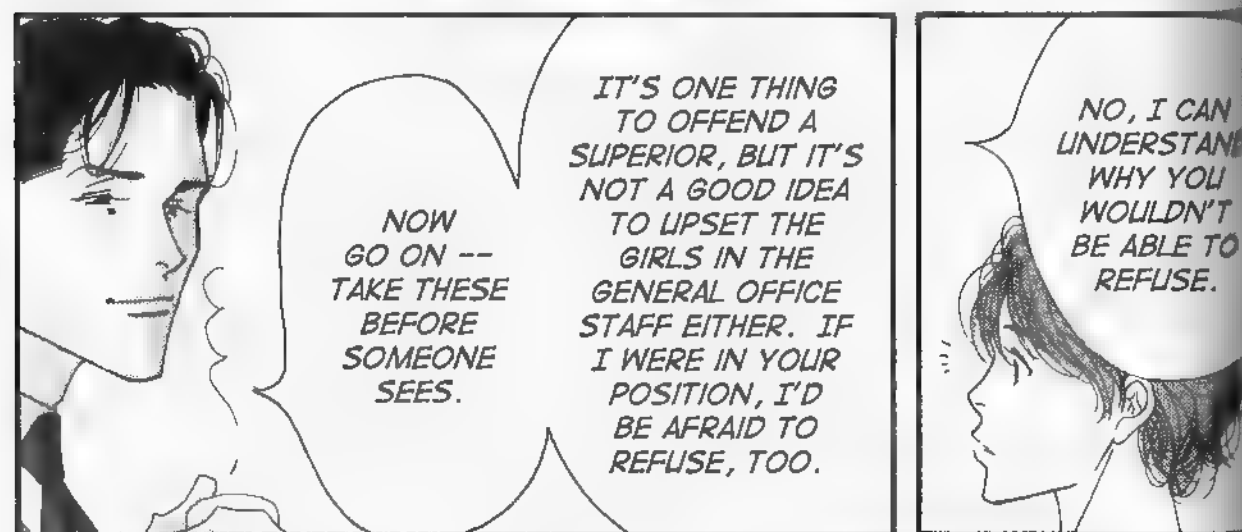


TAMIKO.

AUNT,  
UNCLE...

THANK YOU  
FOR  
EVERYTHING  
THESE TEN  
YEARS.







I'M VERY SORRY! I'LL CONTACT THE OTHER PARTY RIGHT AWAY, AND...!!

WHY DON'T YOU JUST QUIT?! A STUPID WOMAN LIKE YOU, WHOSE ONLY QUALIFICATION IS THAT YOU GRADUATED FROM TODAY...THE ONLY REASON WE KEEP YOU HERE IS FOR APPEARANCE'S SAKE... TO SHOW HOW EQUAL-OPPORTUNITY WE ARE! AND THIS IS HOW YOU REPAY US?!

I'M SO SORRY!

DON'T BOTHER APOLOGIZING! I'M ASKING YOU TO HURRY UP AND QUIT!!



IT'S NOW!!



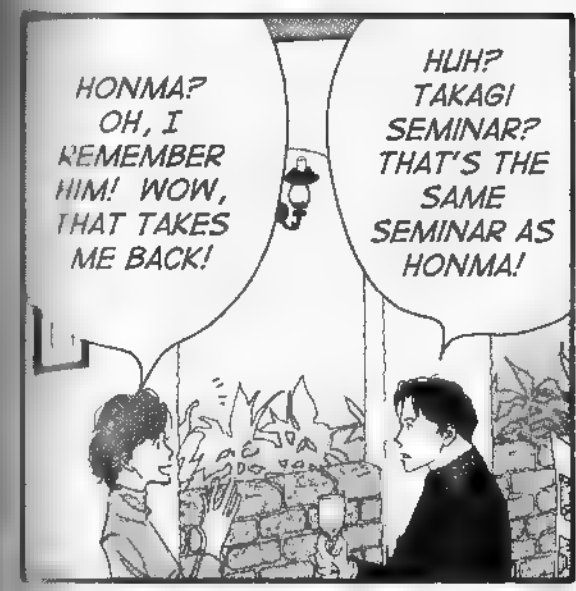
NOW...



...LIGH!

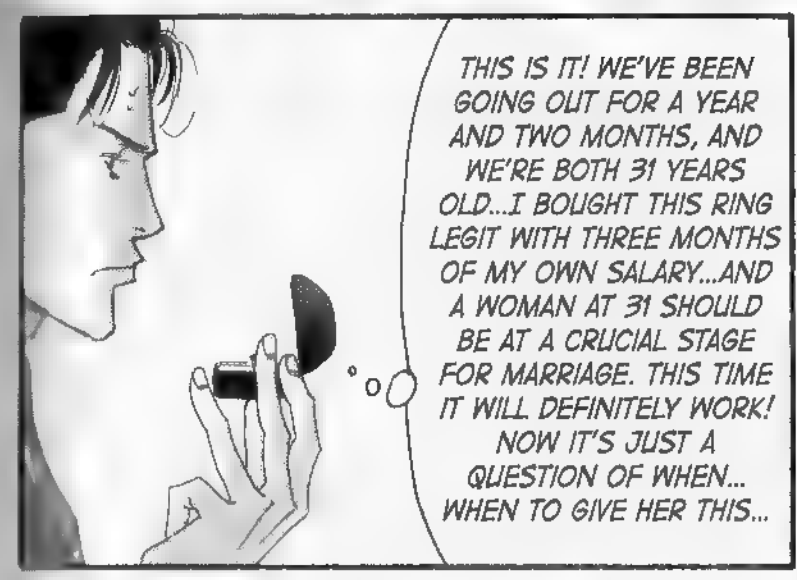


I AM VERY SORRY!



HONMA? OH, I REMEMBER HIM! WOW, THAT TAKES ME BACK!

HUH? TAKAGI SEMINAR? THAT'S THE SAME SEMINAR AS HONMA!

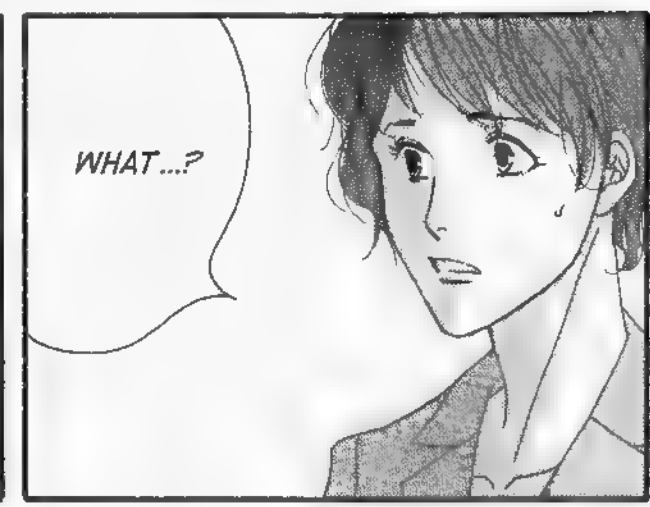


THIS IS IT! WE'VE BEEN GOING OUT FOR A YEAR AND TWO MONTHS, AND WE'RE BOTH 31 YEARS OLD...I BOUGHT THIS RING LEGIT WITH THREE MONTHS OF MY OWN SALARY...AND A WOMAN AT 31 SHOULD BE AT A CRUCIAL STAGE FOR MARRIAGE. THIS TIME IT WILL DEFINITELY WORK! NOW IT'S JUST A QUESTION OF WHEN... WHEN TO GIVE HER THIS...



DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA HOW MUCH YOU'VE COST THIS COMPANY? FOUR-HUNDRED MILLION.

THEY'VE CAN-CELED.



WHAT...?



I DON'T WANT TO QUIT HERE! EVEN IF NO ONE ELSE WOULD SAY IT, I THOUGHT YOU WOULD TELL ME TO KEEP TRYING!



SO, YOU THOUGHT ALL WOMEN WOULD JUST FALL FOR A LINE LIKE THAT...



LEAVE.

PLEASE LEAVE. I CAN'T ACCEPT THIS RING.



I THOUGHT YOU WERE THE ONLY ONE WHO CONSIDERED ME AS AN EQUAL AT WORK...!



DON'T WANT IT.

HONMA... HERE...YOU CAN HAVE THIS RING...



IF IT'S REALLY THAT HARD FOR YOU, YOU SHOULD JUST QUIT.

IF IT COMES DOWN TO IT, I'LL TAKE CARE OF YOU FOR THE REST OF YOUR LIFE...OK?

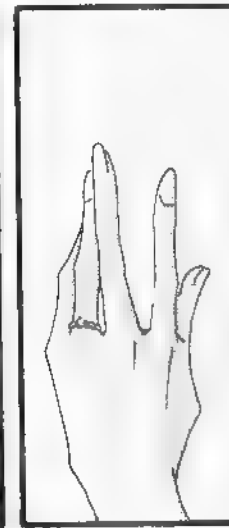
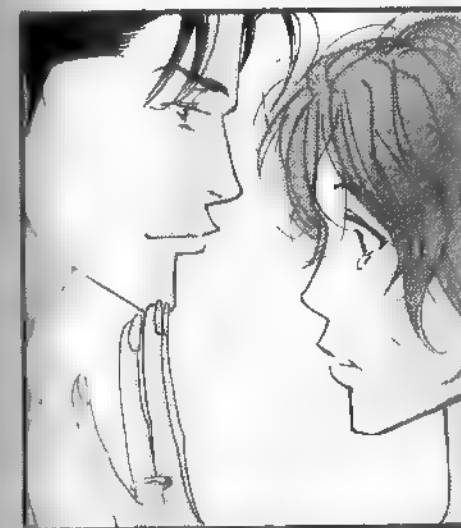


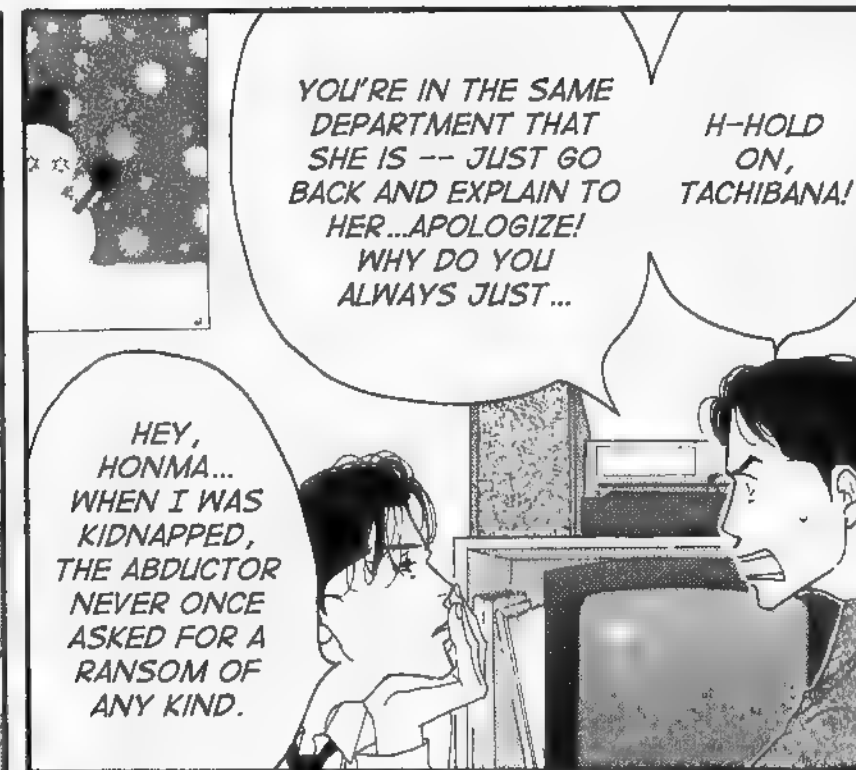
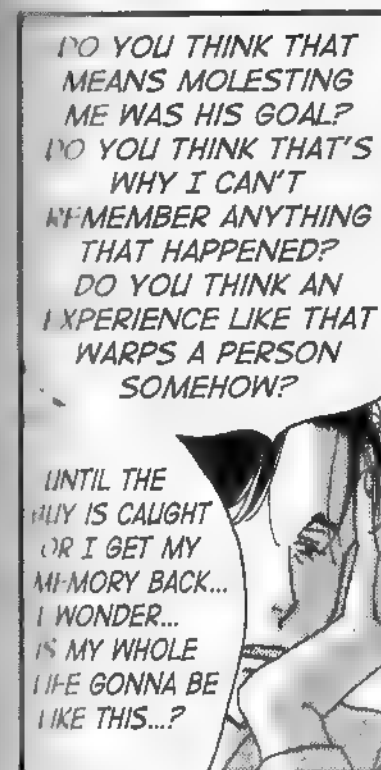
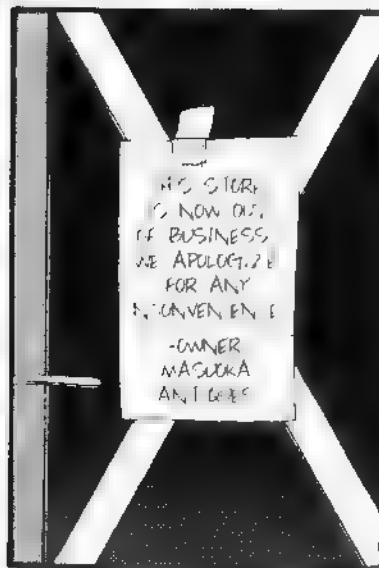
SHH... COME ON NOW...YOU DON'T HAVE TO GET SO WORKED UP ABOUT IT.

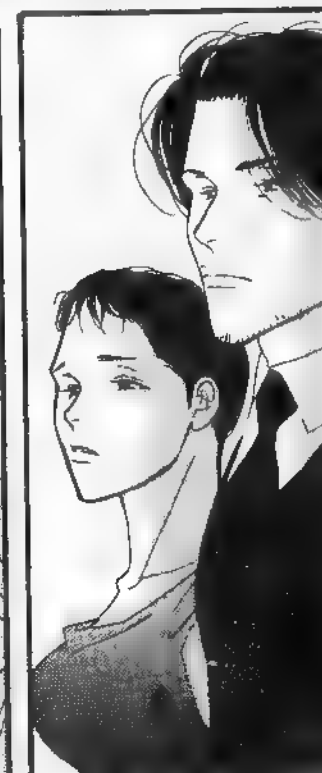
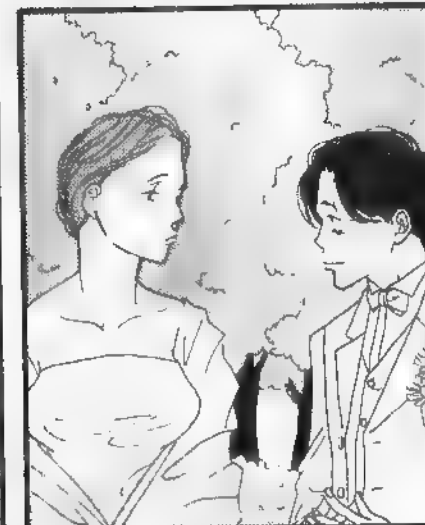
KEII CHIRO...

WHAT SHOULD I DO...

WHAT SHOULD I DO...

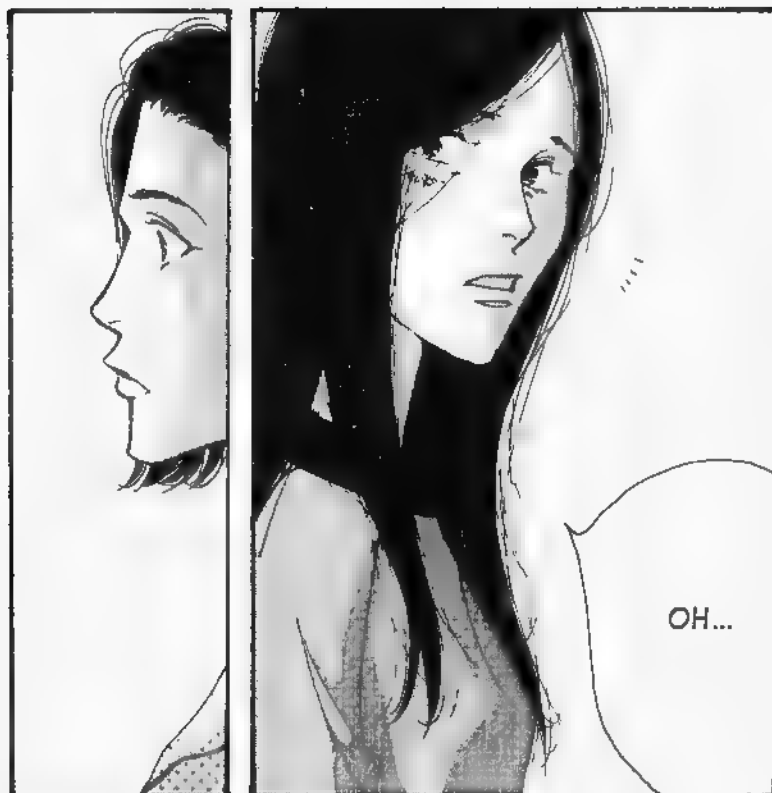








*Recipe 14*



OH...



WAIT,  
MRS.  
SHINJO!  
MRS.  
CHIZUKO  
SHINJO!



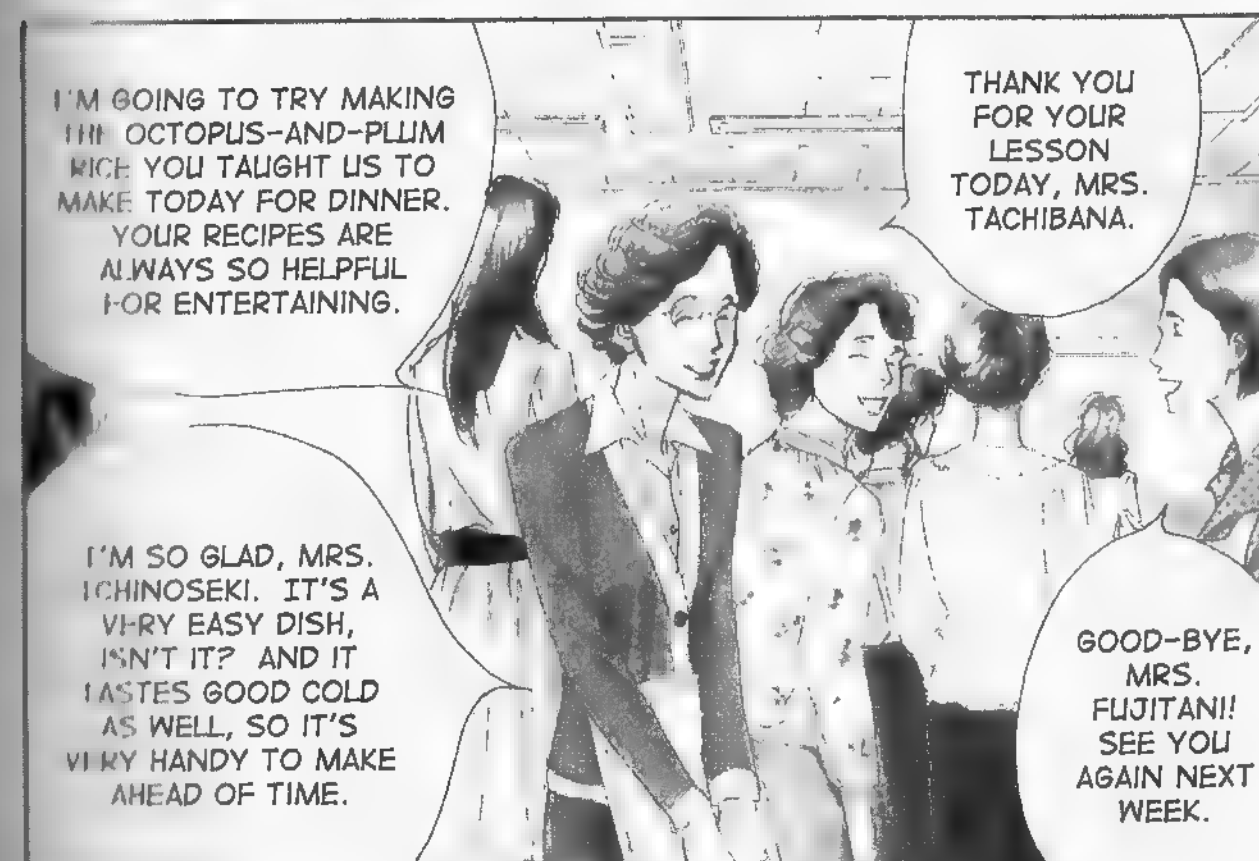
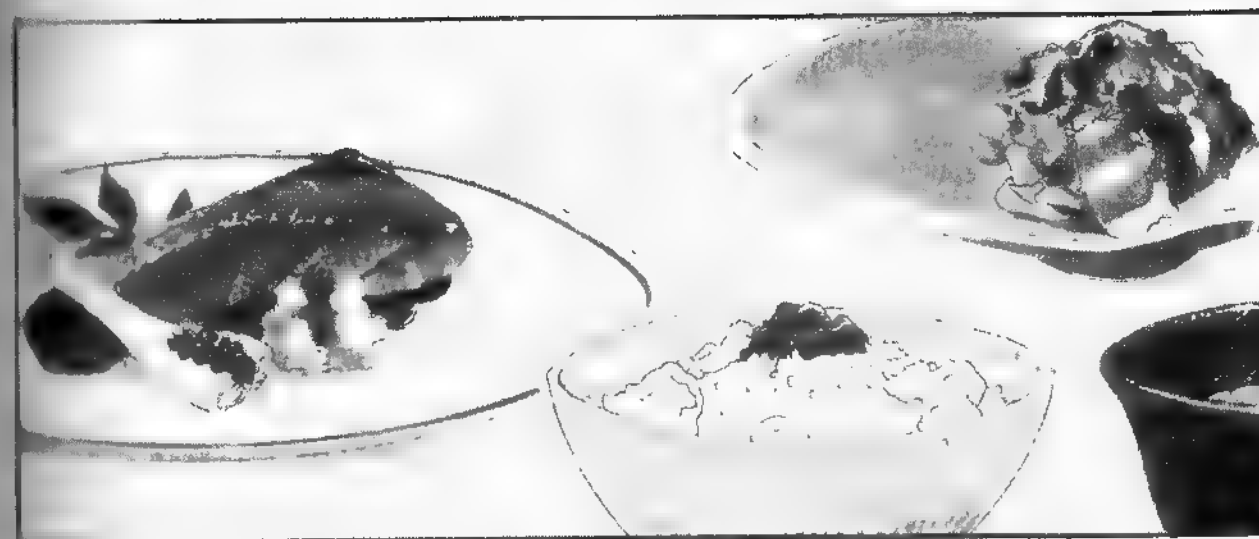
....  
IT'S YOUR  
HUSBAND AGAIN,  
ISN'T IT?  
MRS. SHINJO!



I SAW UNDER  
YOUR SLEEVE.  
I KNOW ABOUT  
YOUR COUNTLESS  
BRUISES. IT'S  
GETTING WORSE  
AND **WORSE!!**

WHAT  
ARE YOU  
SAYING?!

IT'S SO  
EMBARRASSING...  
BUT IT'S NOT AS  
BAD AS BEFORE.  
SINCE I'VE BEEN  
TAKING YOUR  
CLASSES, THERE  
ARE DAYS WHEN HE  
GLADLY EATS  
MY COOKING...



I'M GOING TO TRY MAKING  
THE OCTOPUS-AND-PLUM  
RICE YOU TAUGHT US TO  
MAKE TODAY FOR DINNER.  
YOUR RECIPES ARE  
ALWAYS SO HELPFUL  
FOR ENTERTAINING.

THANK YOU  
FOR YOUR  
LESSON  
TODAY, MRS.  
TACHIBANA.

I'M SO GLAD, MRS.  
ICHINOSEKI. IT'S A  
VERY EASY DISH,  
ISN'T IT? AND IT  
TASTES GOOD COLD  
AS WELL, SO IT'S  
VERY HANDY TO MAKE  
AHEAD OF TIME.

GOOD-BYE,  
MRS.  
FUJITANI!!  
SEE YOU  
AGAIN NEXT  
WEEK.



IF YOU STAY THERE, SOONER OR LATER YOU'LL BE KILLED! WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO YOUR SON THEN?!



DON'T WORRY! OUR HOUSEKEEPER JUST LEFT, SO WE HAVE A SPARE ROOM. IF THERE ARE ANY PROBLEMS WITH THE CUSTODY OF YOUR SON, I'LL INTRODUCE YOU TO A GOOD LAWYER!

MRS. SHINJO! LEAVE YOUR HOUSE IMMEDIATELY AND COME TO MY HOME! BRING YOUR SON, TOO!

WHAT?

B...BUT MRS. TACHIBANA, I...

YOU CAN TELL SHE'S TACHIBANA'S MOTHER!!

THUMP!!



I CAN'T LEAVE THIS HOUSE...! I'VE NEVER WORKED A DAY IN MY LIFE!

I CAN'T...



MOTHER...



THIS CHILD WHO IS STILL SUCH A BABY DESPITE HIS YEARS...LET HIM AT LEAST HAVE A LIFE WITHOUT MONEY WORRIES...

THAT'S RIGHT... NO MATTER HOW MUCH I MAY LOOK DOWN ON THEM, I CAN'T SUPPORT MYSELF OR THIS CHILD WITHOUT THE HELP OF THE SHINJO FAMILY.

MOTHER ...



"HOW LONG ARE YOU GOING TO KEEP ACTING THE KOBAYAKAWA PRINCESS? IN YOUR HEART YOU LOOK DOWN ON SOMEONE LIKE ME WHO COMES FROM LOWLY STOCK, DON'T YOU?" AND IT'S TRUE... I DO LOOK DOWN ON HIM.

BUT I DESERVE IT. IT'S JUST AS MY HUSBAND SAYS.



HE'S VULGAR AND VAIN AND HAS MANY OTHER WOMEN BESIDES ME...IF I DIDN'T LOOK DOWN ON HIM, HOW COULD I GO ON?



わんわん!!  
THUNK



OF COURSE IT SICKENS ME, TOO...BUT WHAT COULD I DO IF I LEFT?

EVERYTHING IS FINE AS LONG AS I PUT UP WITH IT...IF I DON'T, MY SON...MY CHIKAGE WILL SUFFER, TOO...!!



PUFF



TKTKTKTK  
TKKK TKTK



I'LL BE BIGGER  
THAN FATHER  
SOON...THEN  
WE'LL BE OKAY  
WITHOUT HIM.  
I CAN TAKE  
FATHER'S  
PLACE.

MOTHER.

IT'S OKAY,  
MOTHER -- I'M  
ALREADY A BIG  
BOY...I'M THE  
TALLEST IN MY  
CLASS.



...!!

SCRATCH  
SCRATCH  
SCRATCH!!



...  
...



CLAK  
CLAK  
CLAK  
CLAK  
CLAK



CREAK

MOMMY...

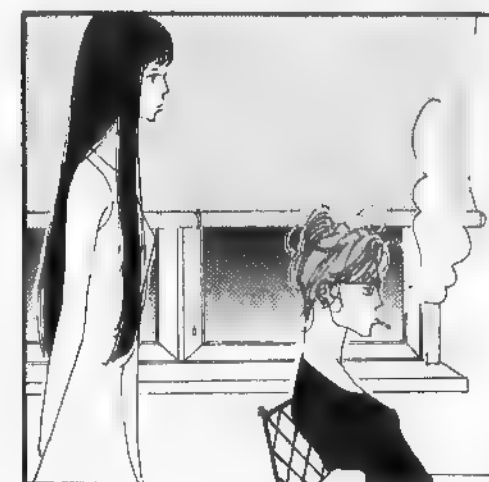
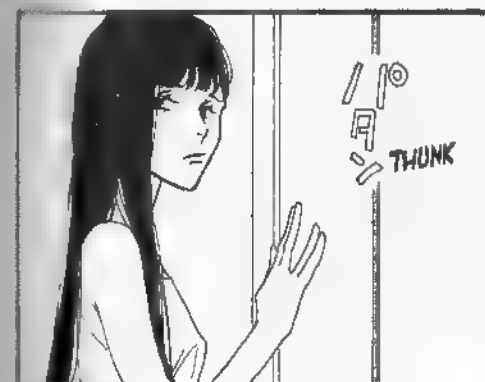
URRGH...THIS  
WON'T HOLD  
TOGETHER  
AT ALL,  
DAMMIT...!

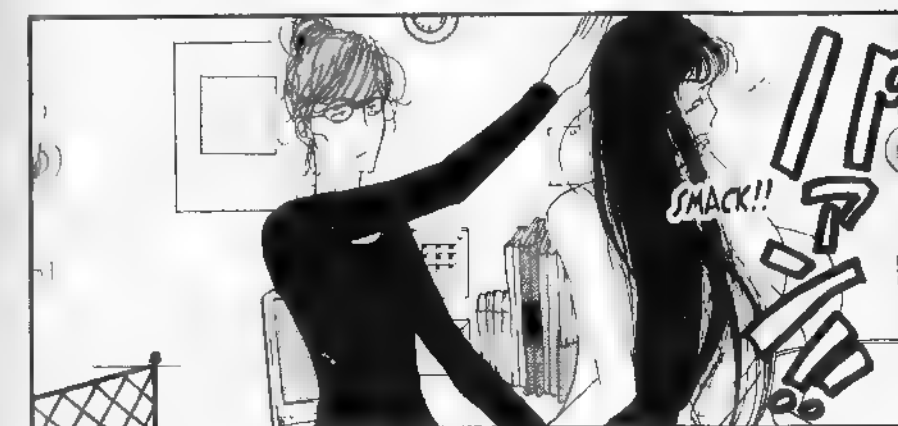
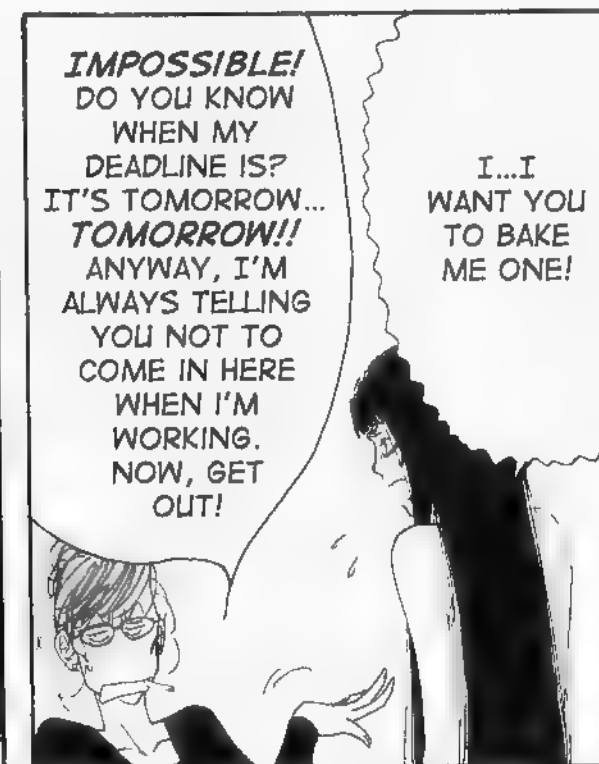
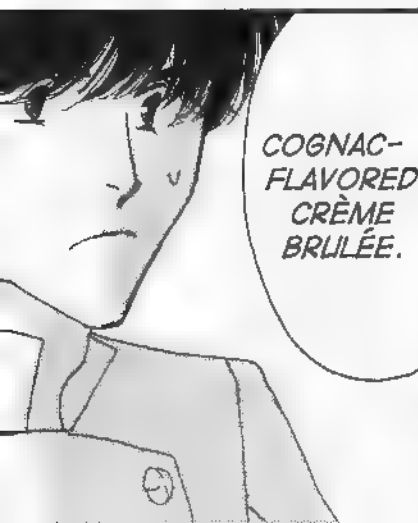
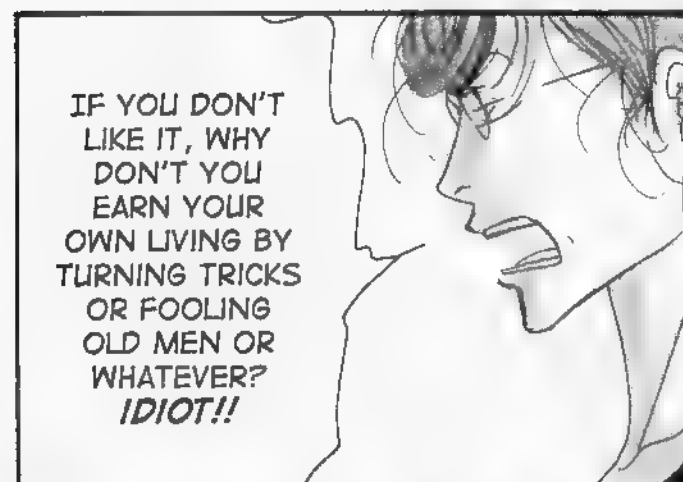
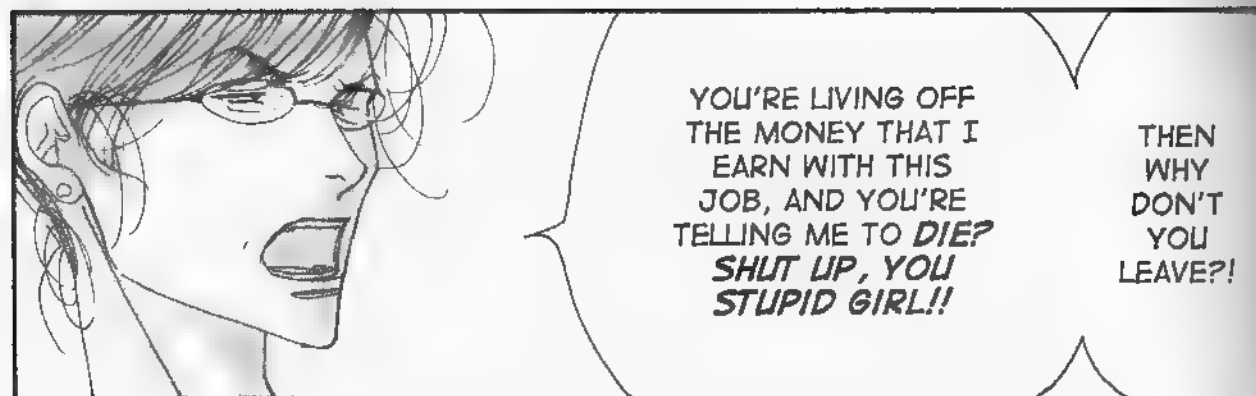


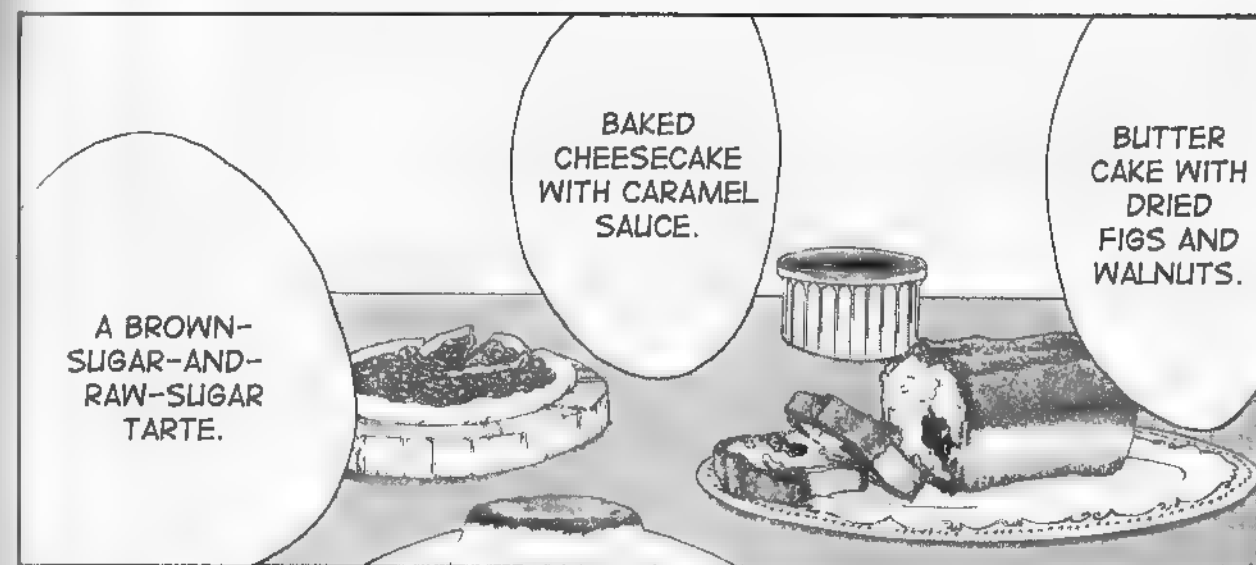
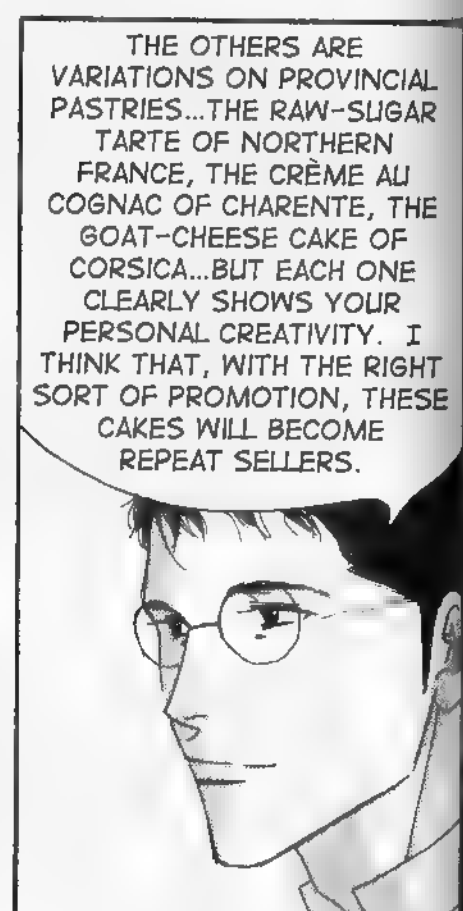
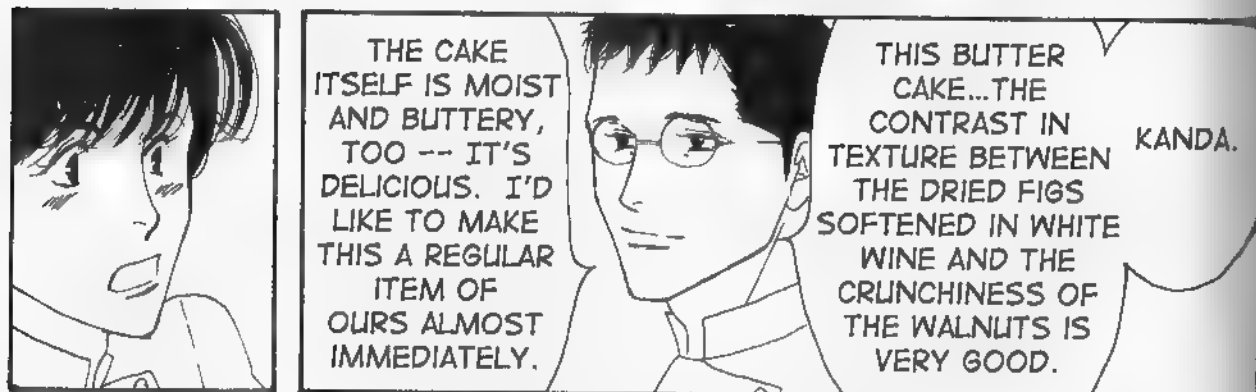
LET'S  
LEAVE THIS  
HOUSE! LET'S  
LEAVE THIS  
HOUSE  
TOGETHER  
AND LIVE FOR  
OURSELVES...!!

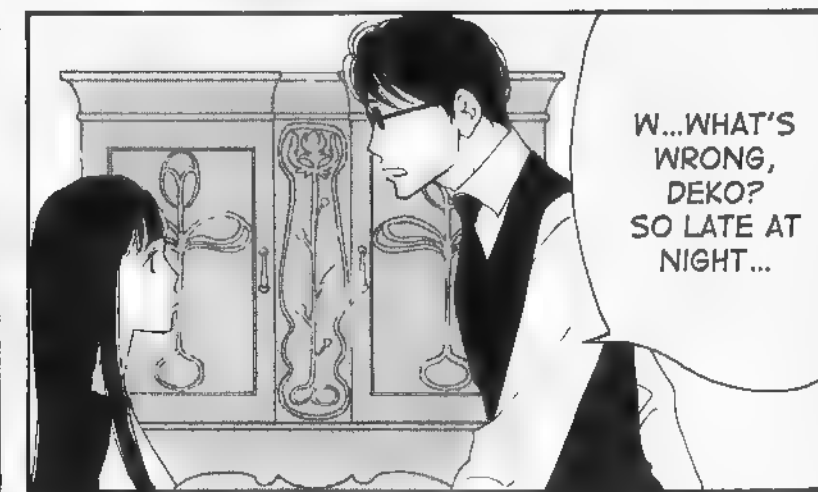
I'M SORRY! I'M  
SORRY! I LIED...  
I WASN'T STAYING  
FOR YOUR SAKE...  
I WAS SCARED FOR  
MYSELF, TO BE  
WITHOUT MONEY!

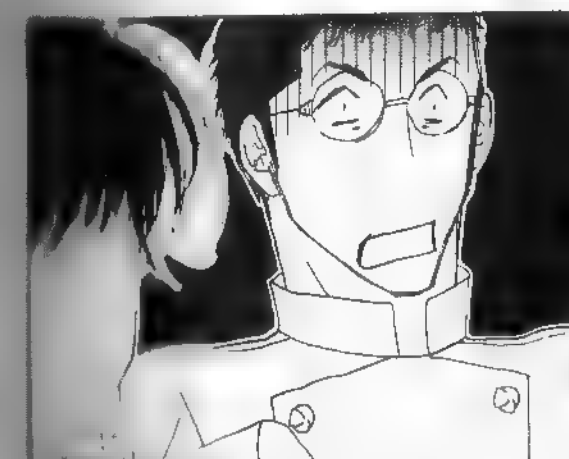
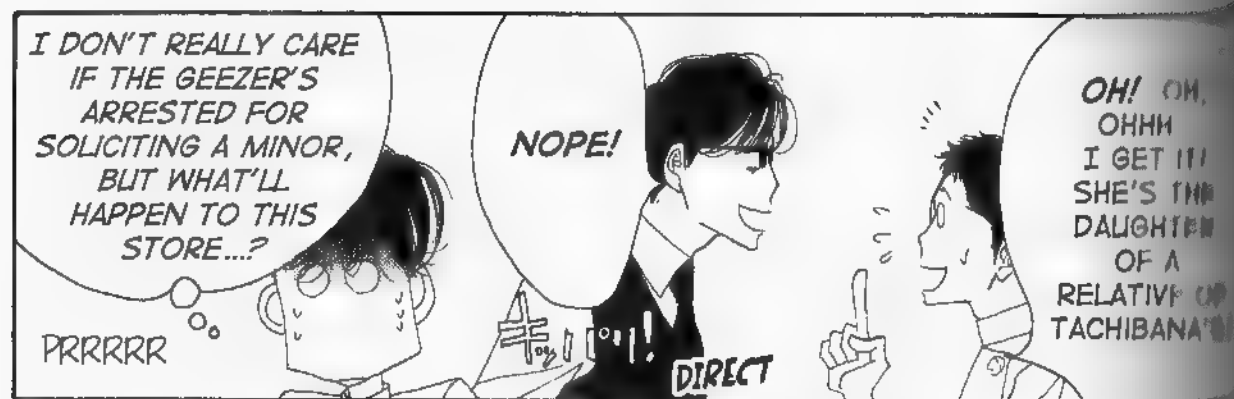
CHIKAGE!













BUT THEN  
MOMMY *HIT*  
DEKO.

I THINK  
MOMMY  
DOESN'T  
LOVE DEKO  
ANYMORE...



WHEN  
YOU  
LOOK AT  
MOMMY,  
SHE LOOKS  
LIKE A  
GROWNUP  
TO YOU,  
DOESN'T  
SHE?

DEI-DEI.



DEI-DEI...  
YOU'RE A BIG  
GIRL NOW.

THAT'S  
RIGHT.

THEY  
DO...?

SO WHEN YOU  
SEE THAT YOUR  
MOMMY IS HAVING  
A TOUGH TIME, YOU  
HAVE TO ACT LIKE  
THE MOMMY--  
FOR YOUR MOM  
THIS TIME.



BUT EVEN YOUR MOMMY CAN  
BE TROUBLED...LIKE WHEN  
SHE'S WORKING REALLY HARD.  
GROWNUPS HAVE TIMES WHEN  
THEY WANT TO CLING TO  
SOMEBODY, TOO...JUST LIKE  
DEI-DEI DOES.

DID YOU  
KNOW  
THAT?



スラム  
SLAM!



HM?



...



CLIMB



スラム



MOMMY...SHE USED TO  
HOLD DEKO LIKE THIS...SHE  
USED TO ROCK DEKO BACK  
AND FORTH LIKE CHI  
DOES...BUT NOW SHE  
DOESN'T ANYMORE...SO  
DEKO WENT UP TO  
MOMMY AND HUGGED HER.

CHI...

HMM...?





...IS THIS ONE'S...



THIS...



WHAT A SHOCK...SO, HE WAS SEXUALLY ACTIVE AFTER ALL...

...FATHER...?!

HE ACTUALLY KNEW HOW TO MAKE CHILDREN...



I WAS FEELING PRETTY ANXIOUS BACK THEN.



CHIK



THIS STORE IS TOO HARD TO FIND, KEIICHIRO!

OH, HEY. YOU TOOK YOUR TIME, SAKURAKO.



MISS SAKURAKO, PLEASE DON'T HIT HER!

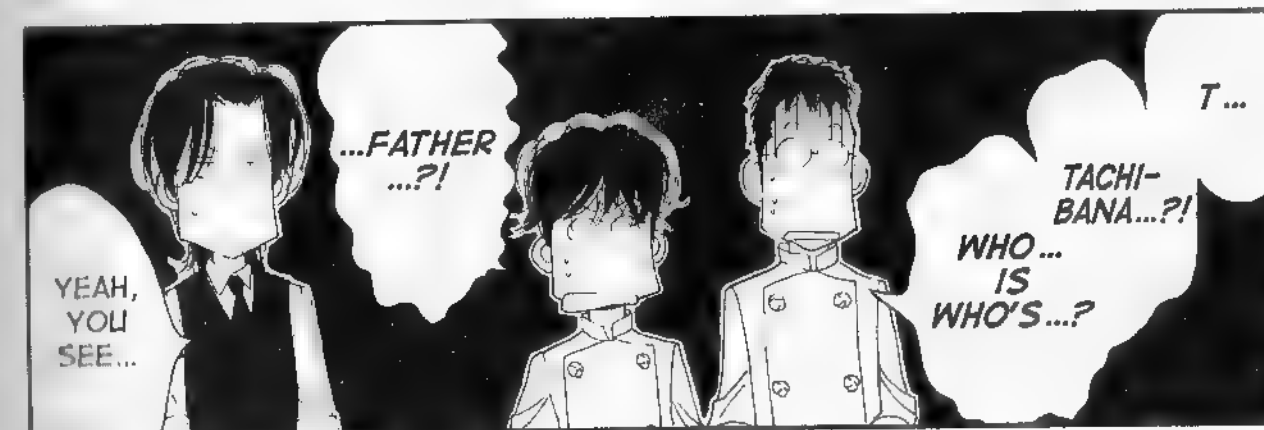
WAAA AH~!

YOU IDIOT DAUGHTER! YOU TOOK MONEY FROM MY WALLET FOR A TAXI, DIDN'T YOU!

KAEDEKO!!



WHAT, CHIKAGE... SUDDENLY FEELING FATHERLY AFTER ALL THIS TIME?!



YEAH, YOU SEE...

...FATHER...?!

TACHIBANA...?! WHO... IS WHO'S...?

T...



HE DOESN'T  
LOOK VERY  
BRIGHT, BUT HE  
DOES LOOK LIKE  
HE'S GOT SOME  
LIVELY SPERM...



I'M  
SORRY...



WITH MY BRAINS AND  
CHIKAGE'S LOOKS,  
DON'T YOU THINK OUR  
CHILD WOULD BE THE  
BEST?! OF COURSE  
THERE WAS THE  
CHANCE THAT THE  
RESULT COULD BE THE  
EXACT OPPOSITE, BUT...

THINK  
ABOUT  
IT!

SO  
CRUDE



one-win-  
one-loss?

NO  
BRAINS  
EITHER

JUST LIKE  
CHIKAGE, BOTH  
INSIDE AND OUT.



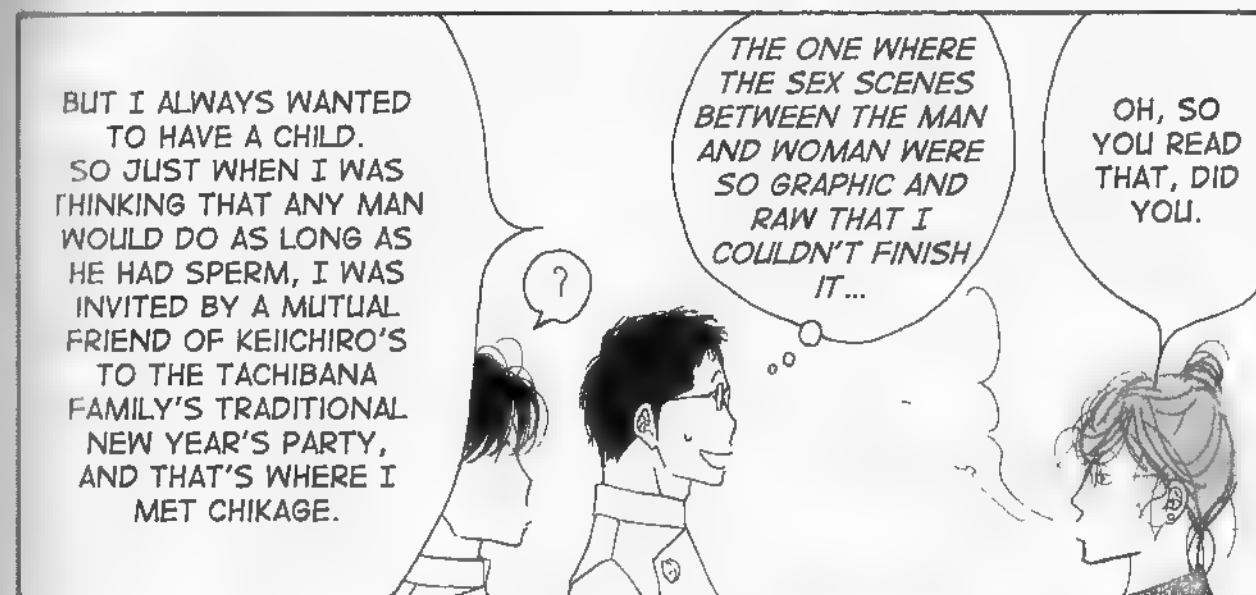
AND THE  
RESULT?



U...UM...THEN  
COULD IT BE THAT  
YOU'RE SAKURAKO  
SAKAKI, THE  
NOVELIST?! THE  
AUTHOR OF  
"AFTERGLOW"?!  
...

HUH?!  
THE  
NAOKI  
AWARD?!

SURE I WENT THROUGH  
A LOT OF MEN, BUT  
WHEN IT CAME TO  
MARRIAGE...ONE THING  
LED TO ANOTHER.  
I WON THE NAOKI  
AWARD, GOT BUSIER...  
AND BEFORE I KNEW IT,  
I WAS APPROACHING  
FORTY.



BUT I ALWAYS WANTED  
TO HAVE A CHILD.  
SO JUST WHEN I WAS  
THINKING THAT ANY MAN  
WOULD DO AS LONG AS  
HE HAD SPERM, I WAS  
INVITED BY A MUTUAL  
FRIEND OF KEIICHIRO'S  
TO THE TACHIBANA  
FAMILY'S TRADITIONAL  
NEW YEAR'S PARTY,  
AND THAT'S WHERE I  
MET CHIKAGE.

THE ONE WHERE  
THE SEX SCENES  
BETWEEN THE MAN  
AND WOMAN WERE  
SO GRAPHIC AND  
RAW THAT I  
COULDN'T FINISH  
IT...

OH, SO  
YOU READ  
THAT, DID  
YOU.

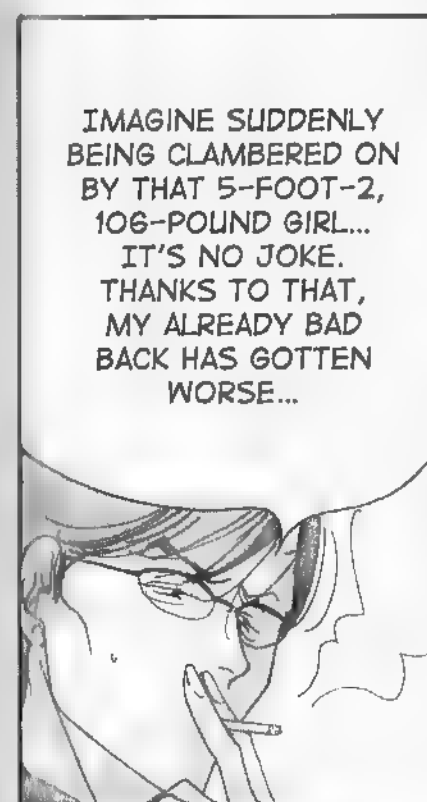
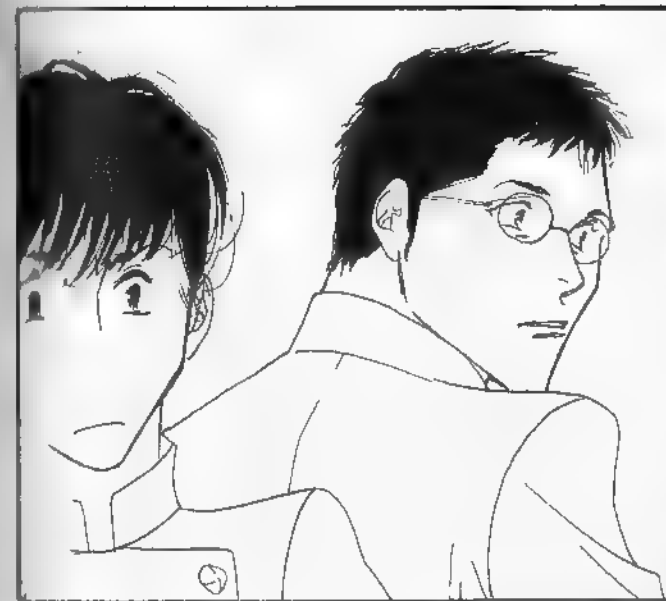
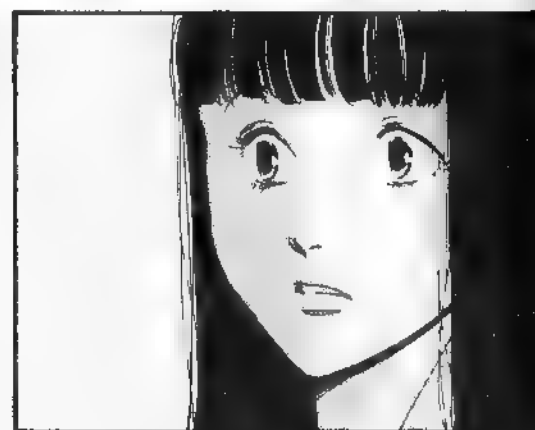
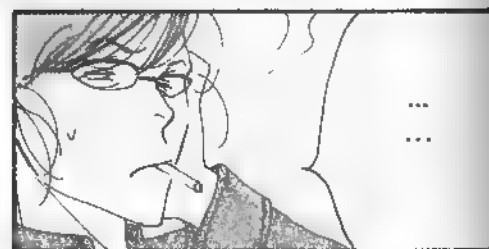


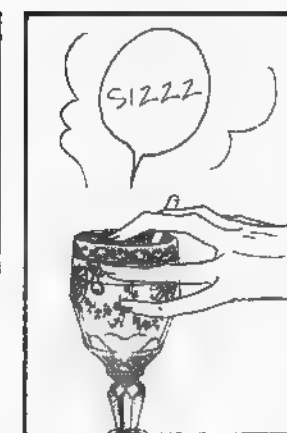
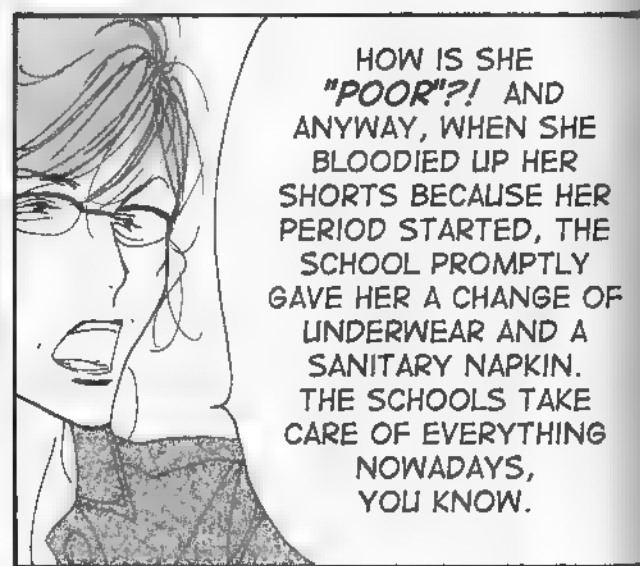
I...I'M  
SO  
SORRY!

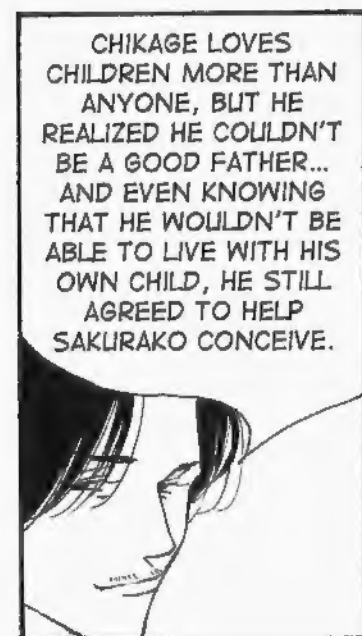
WHAT'S  
GOING ON?!  
WHAT IDIOT  
THREW  
CHAMPAGNE  
OVER MY  
HEAD?!

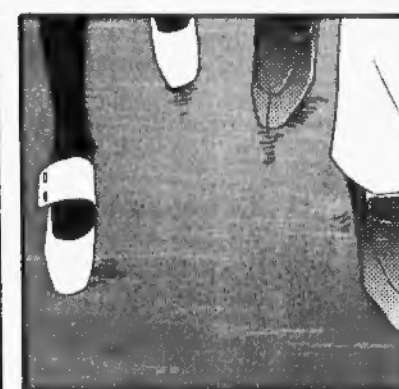
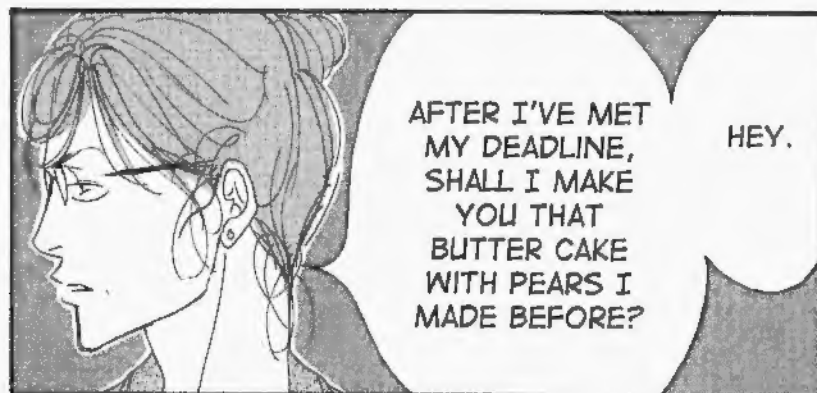


SPLOOSH!



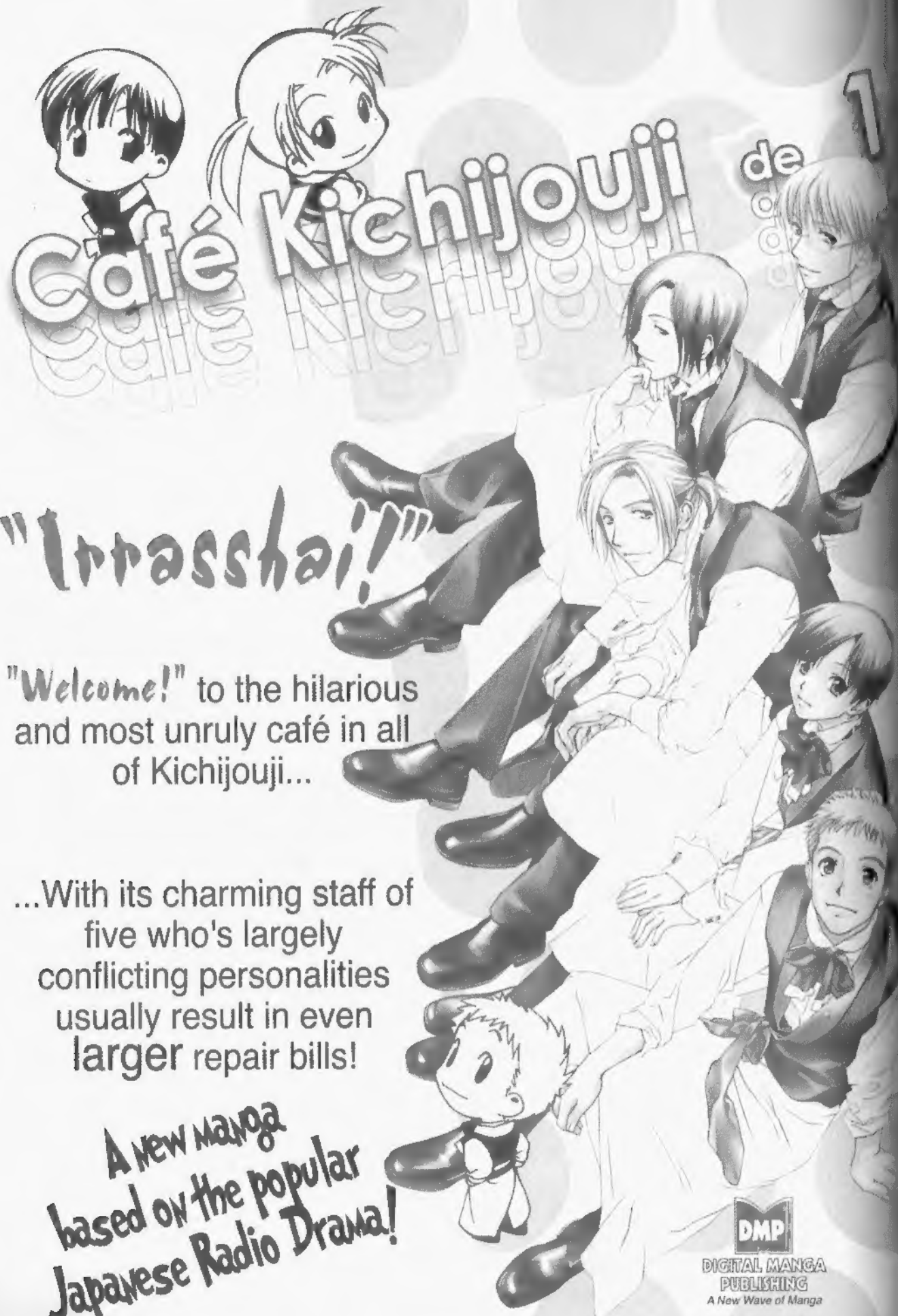








CONTINUED TO VOLUME 4



"Irrasshai!"

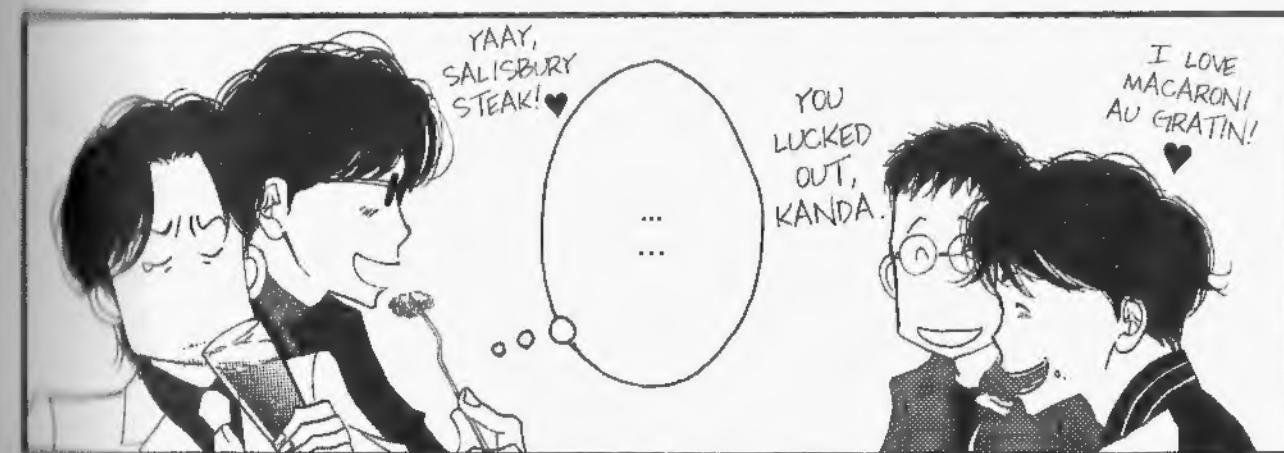
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WHEN MAKING DINNER PLANS, BE SURE TO MAKE  
THEM WITH FRIENDS WHO SHARE YOUR TASTES.